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ABSTRACT

An evaluation of work experience programs in Queensland state secondary schools had three goals. It examined current practices and identified effective practices to guide program planning and development; based on expected student benefits, it provided a categorization of the types of experience that students encounter during work experience programs; and it determined teacher views on the importance and necessity of work experience in the school curriculum. The evaluation data collection proceeded through three stages: a preliminary study in metropolitan secondary and special schools, a mail survey of all state high schools and secondary departments regarding selected aspects of program organization, and on-site investigations. Three types of programs were offered: general programs offering work experience to all or most students in a particular year level, programs associated with special transition-to-work courses for selected students, and programs associated with the teaching of a particular subject. Nine categories of work experience placements were found: regular work, supernumerary, apprenticeship, learner assistant, guided tour, orientation (different work opportunities), onlooker, simulated, and school-based. Most coordinators and teachers felt that work experience benefited students, the school, and the community and should have a status approaching, but below that of, academic subjects in the curricula. (YLB)

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EVALUATION OF WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAMS FOR QUEENSLAND STATE SECONDARY STUDENTS-1981

Ted Hobbs

Research Branch
Department of Education, Queensland

April 1982

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CONTENTS

		Page
1. INTRODUCTION		1
2. GOALS OF THE EVALUATION		2
2.1 INVENTORY OF POSSIBLE OUTCOMES OF WORK EXPERIENCE		2
2.1.1	Potential Benefits to Students	2
2.1.2	Potential Benefits to Teachers	3
2.1.3	Potential Benefits to Employers	3
2.1.4	Potential Benefits to Parents	4
2.1.5	Potential Benefits to Schools	4
2.2 ASPECTS OF ORGANISATIONAL PRACTICE AFFECTING OUTCOMES OF WORK EXPERIENCE		4
2.3 GOALS OF THE EVALUATION		5
3. PROCEDURES		7
3.1 THE PRELIMINARY STUDY		7
3.2 THE SURVEY OF SECONDARY SCHOOL PRACTICES		7
3.2.1	The Survey Questionnaire	8
3.2.2	Conduct of the Survey	8
3.3 THE ON-SITE INVESTIGATIONS		9
3.3.1	Organisational Practices and Staff Views	9
3.3.2	Students' Experiences On-the-Job	10
3.4 SUMMARY		11
4. RESULTS OF THE SURVEY OF SECONDARY SCHOOL PRACTICES		12
4.1 TYPES OF PROGRAMS OFFERED		12
4.2 NUMBERS OF STUDENTS		13
4.3 EXTENT OF WORK EXPERIENCE OFFERED		13
4.4 ASSOCIATED SCHOOL ACTIVITIES		14
4.5 INVOLVEMENT OF SCHOOL STAFF		18
4.6 ALLOCATION OF WORK PLACEMENTS TO STUDENTS		21
4.7 EMPLOYER PARTICIPATION		23
4.7.1	Employer Response	23
4.7.2	Employer Briefings	24
4.8 STUDENT EVALUATION		27
4.9 CONTACT WITH PARENTS		29
4.10 GENERAL COMMENTS BY RESPONDENTS		29
4.11 SUMMARY		30
4.12 DISCUSSION		31

19880—2

		Page
5. RESULTS OF INTERVIEWS WITH SCHOOL STAFF		32
5.1 ORGANISATIONAL DETAILS		32
5.1.1	The Work Experience Co-ordinators	32
5.1.2	Placement of Students	32
5.1.3	Contact with Employers by School Staff	33
5.1.4	Interaction between Student and Employer	33
5.1.5	On-Site Visits during Work Experience	34
5.1.6	Classroom Activities Pre- and Post-Work Experience	34
5.1.7	Other Aspects	35
5.2 CO-ORDINATORS' AND TEACHERS' VIEWS ON WORK EXPERIENCE		36
5.2.1	Benefits to the School and Community	36
5.2.2	Duration of Work Experience	36
5.2.3	Staff Support	37
5.2.4	Employer Participation	37
5.2.5	Student Participation	38
5.2.6	Work Experience as a Legitimate Educational Activity	38
5.3 SUMMARY		39
5.4 DISCUSSION		40
6. RESULTS OF INTERVIEWS WITH STUDENTS		41
6.1 REGULAR WORK PLACEMENT		42
6.2 SUPERNUMERARY PLACEMENT		43
6.3 APPRENTICESHIP PLACEMENT		43
6.4 LEARNER/ASSISTANT PLACEMENT		44
6.5 GUIDED TOUR PLACEMENT		44
6.6 ORIENTATION PLACEMENT		45
6.7 ONLOOKER PLACEMENT		45
6.8 SIMULATED WORK PLACEMENT		46
6.9 SCHOOL-BASED WORK EXPERIENCE		46
6.10 DISCUSSION		47

		Page
7. CONCLUSIONS		48
7.1	PREDOMINANT PATTERNS	48
7.2	CLARIFYING THE GOALS OF WORK EXPERIENCE	49
7.3	PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH ORGANISING WORK EXPERIENCE	50
7.3.1	Providing Support for Individual Students	50
7.3.2	Arranging and Monitoring Work Experience Placements	51
7.3.3	On-Site Visits during Work Experience	53
7.3.4	Summary	54
7.4	DISCUSSION	54
7.5	GENERAL SUMMARY OF FINDINGS	56
APPENDIX 1: THE SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE		59
APPENDIX 2: GUIDE FOR PLANNING, EVALUATION, AND REVIEW OF WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAMS		72
BIBLIOGRAPHY		79

1. INTRODUCTION

In 1979, the Government of Queensland proclaimed legislation covering the conditions under which school children can obtain full-time work experience as part of a school program. Work experience had been for some time a regular component of programs in many technical and special schools, and early in the 1970's, a few secondary schools began to offer work experience programs to their students. After the proclamation of the legislation, work experience rapidly became widely adopted in Queensland secondary schools.

Under the legislation students may work up to 30 days per school year, with a maximum of 10 days under any one employer. Payment is not allowed. An agreement is entered into between the school and the employer with approval from the student's parents. Generally, the Act covers legal aspects such as age limits, accident and damage protection and liability, and a few restrictions designed to prevent exploitation or abuse. There are no provisions concerning the educational purpose of work experience nor its relationship to other aspects of the school curriculum. The *Work Experience Manual for Queensland Schools*, published by the Department of Education in 1979, does contain guidelines for the operation of work experience programs. This document discusses various options for planning and implementing work experience programs in secondary schools without imposing a fixed set of procedures, and recommends that schools develop programs based on an analysis of their students' needs. Different schools, according to the Manual, might use work experience in different ways, in pursuit of different goals.

During 1982, the Research Branch of the Queensland Department of Education carried out an evaluation of work experience programs in Queensland State schools.

The purpose of the evaluation project was to investigate work experience in practice, in order to assist the Department and schools to improve the quality and value of work experiences. More specifically, the evaluation aimed to:

- describe current practices associated with work experience in State schools;
- elicit information which could be applied in decision making at all levels with respect to work experience;
- contribute towards a better understanding of work experience, its problems and its potential;
- develop procedures which could be used at system and school levels to monitor and evaluate work experience programs.

Details of the various phases of the evaluation and the results have been published in a series of reports as follows:

1. Preliminary study (First Interim Report).

2. Survey of Secondary School Work Experience Practices (Second Interim Report).

3. Organisational Practices and Staff Views (Third Interim Report).

4. Categories of Work Experience Placements (Fourth Interim Report).

5. Survey of Special School Work Experience (Evaluation Series).

Copies of these reports are available from the Research Branch, Department of Education, Queensland.

This final report contains a description of all aspects of the evaluation and a summary of findings based on the results of the various phases of the evaluation project.

2. GOALS OF THE EVALUATION

Designing the evaluation of work experience had to take account of three complicating factors:

1. Work experience is not a course of study nor a sequence of specified learning activities. It is a setting in which various opportunities for learning may occur. It may however form part of a program of activities.

2. Apart from the actual on-the-job experiences students receive, the way in which the program is organised turns out to be a factor in determining the outcomes of the program.

3. The legislation and official guidelines allow schools considerable flexibility in both the selection of goals and design of programs, and a preliminary investigation revealed that goals and organisation of programs may vary between schools, within a school, or even from student to student.

In order to deal with the variation with respect to goals, practices, and outcomes, the starting point of the evaluation design was the compilation of two lists:

1. An inventory of possible outcomes of work experience.
2. A list of aspects of practice associated with the organisation of work experience which seem to be factors affecting outcomes.

The lists were established on the basis of the literature related to work experience, theoretical analysis, and a preliminary investigation in the field. The two lists are shown below, followed by discussion of the specific goals of the evaluation.

2.1 INVENTORY OF POSSIBLE OUTCOMES OF WORK EXPERIENCE

The listing which follows is intended to include all of the possible benefits which could follow from a work experience program. It covers potential benefits not only for students, but also for teachers, parents, employers, and the school generally.

It should not be interpreted as a list of the benefits which ought to be expected from every program. Some of the benefits may be allocated a low priority in favour of others in a given program. For example, a school may offer a program aimed primarily at students' personal and social development, which is not specifically concerned with the development of general work habits or particular job skills. The potential benefits become goals of a program only if they are consciously aimed for in the planning process.

2.1.1 Potential Benefits to Students

The potential benefits of work experience programs to students are grouped under seven headings:

1. *Job or career selection:* Students can obtain knowledge about various job or career options, and evaluate themselves in relation to possible job choices.

2. *Employability:* Students can increase their chances for employment by developing general and specific work skills, habits and attitudes.

3. *A job:* Students can obtain permanent employment directly as the result of a work experience.

4. *Smooth transition to work and adult life:* Students can adapt to the demands, responsibility, independence and routines of working life.

5. *Educational orientation:* Students can increase their appreciation of the relevance and purpose of school study, and be better able to make appropriate educational decisions such as choosing subjects.

6. *General education:* Students can study work itself, including study of specific aspects of work (such as working conditions, pay or union membership), as well as general study of work in a social context (such as work roles or industrial relations).

7. *Personal and social development:* Students can become more mature through increased self knowledge and by mixing with adults outside of the protective school and family environments.

2.1.2 Potential Benefits to Teachers

The potential benefits of work experience to teachers are grouped under four headings:

1. *Personal and social development:* By interacting in a working relationship with adults outside of the confines of the school environment, teachers can develop personally and socially.

2. *Knowledge and understanding of students:* By observing students in situations different from the school environment, teachers can gain broader understanding of the abilities, personalities and characters of their students.

3. *Understanding of the non-academic world:* By observing working life and interacting with employers and other people in the work place, teachers can increase their understanding of the worlds of commerce, industry and government.

4. *Increased relevance in teaching:* By observing the working life which awaits their students, teachers can make the teaching of their subjects more relevant to their students' future.

2.1.3 Potential Benefits to Employers

The potential benefits of work experience to employers are grouped under five headings:

1. *Satisfaction in providing service:* By contributing to the education of youth, employers can provide a valuable service to the community as a whole.

2. *Economic benefit:* Employers can benefit from the contribution students make in return for the opportunity of work experience.

3. *Selection of employees:* Work experience can provide employers with a no-risk low-cost method of screening potential employees.

4. *Contact with schools:* By participating in work experience employers can gain increased knowledge of, input into, and direct involvement in school activities and decision making.

5. *Determining appropriate qualifications for positions:* By observing different students with different types of schooling during work experience, employers can determine what are appropriate qualifications or selection criteria for various jobs.

2.1.4 Potential Benefits to Parents

The potential benefits of work experience to parents are grouped under three headings:

1. *Assistance in guiding children towards adulthood:* By providing assistance to students in career selection and educational choices, and by developing students' employability and general maturity, work experience programs can assist parents in the task of helping their children grow into adulthood.

2. *Improved relationships with their children:* Through being qualified as adult workers, parents are able to guide and assist students in a school activity. This can provide parents with opportunities to get to know their children better, and gain their respect.

3. *Contact with school:* Through work experience, parents can gain knowledge of, input into, and involvement in school activities generally, and the education of their own children in particular.

2.1.5 Potential Benefits to Schools

The potential benefits of work experience to schools are grouped under four headings:

1. *School climate:* Through improved teacher-student relationships and increased relevance of the curriculum, school climate generally may be improved.

2. *Provision for low achievers:* Through work experience programs, schools can accommodate "problem" students for whom the regular program is not appropriate.

3. *School-community relations:* Work experience can bring school, parents, employers and working people together in working relationships, integrating the school into the community. Schools can make better use of the resources of the community.

4. *Improved student orientation to school:* Students' attitudes towards school and motivation to study can be enhanced by clarification of their goals and a better understanding of what school can contribute.

2.2 ASPECTS OF ORGANISATIONAL PRACTICE AFFECTING OUTCOMES OF WORK EXPERIENCE

Apart from the nature of the actual type of on-the-job experience which the student encounters, the outcomes of a work experience program are affected by the particular set of organisational practices employed by the school to arrange the experience, to prepare students for it, and to help students derive the maximum benefit from it. The evaluation design was based on the premise that different outcomes of work experience are made more or less likely by different organisational practices. In Stake's terms, the basis of the evaluation is a consideration of the logical contingencies between intents and transactions.

The types of transactions among organisational procedures which seem to be determiners of outcomes are listed below. Examples are given to illustrate some of the wide range of options available under each heading.

1. *Selection of students for work experience:* A program may include all students in a particular year level for example, or be confined to students in certain classes or with certain identified needs.

2. *Length, number, and timing of blocks of work experience:* Some possible patterns include a single one-week block of work experience, a series of one or two-day experiences, or three blocks of two-weeks. These can be timed to occur early or late in the school year, or in the student's school career.

3. *School activities associated with work experience:* The school may arrange special activities to accompany the work experience. These may range from a few films during lunch hours through to a complete program integrated into the school curriculum throughout the year.

4. *Teacher involvement:* A program may involve from one or two teachers, up to the entire teaching staff. Involvement may vary from assistance with minor administrative detail to full participation in all phases including planning, student counselling and program evaluation.

5. *Briefing and involvement of employers:* An employer might do little more than provide a place for the student, or may take complete responsibility for organising a special program for the student during the work experience. Between these extremes are degrees of teamwork and co-operation between school and employer.

6. *Contacts with parents:* Schools may involve parents in various ways including planning and evaluation of programs, assistance with preparing the students for the experience and helping them through it, or providing clothing or transportation for students. Minimal parent involvement would be approval of the students' work placement.

7. *Evaluation of students:* Students' progress during work experience programs can be evaluated in various formal and informal ways by teachers, parents, employers and the students themselves. Such evaluation could be designed to provide information for students' own use, or for prospective employers, or for input into the school's regular evaluation data. It may cover students' personal and social development, progress in a subject, or suitability for work generally or a particular line of work.

8. *Allocation of job placements to students:* This could be done by allowing students to choose from placements available, by seeking out placements to match students' stated preferences, or by selecting among available placements to meet students' particular needs.

9. *On-site visits by school staff to students and employers during work experience:* On-site visits during work experience may serve one or more of a number of functions including courtesy to employers, education of teachers, evaluation of students, monitoring the work experience provided, or trouble-shooting. They may be informal unannounced calls or pre-arranged carefully structured visits.

2.3 GOALS OF THE EVALUATION

For each of the nine aspects of organisation discussed above there is a wide variation of possible practice. Obviously administrative expediency is a major consideration in deciding on practice under each of the nine headings, but each decision made has implications for the kinds of outcome which are possible. As one example, allocating work experience placements on the basis of students' preferred occupational fields may contribute towards helping students make career decisions. But suppose an intended outcome is the development of a student's self confidence or reliability. The placements available in the chosen occupational fields may not provide opportunities to achieve this outcome, and another method of allocating placements would be used. Other examples can be generated by selecting one of the potential outcomes from the list in Section 2.1 and one of the organisational aspects from Section 2.2, then considering how various options for the organisational aspect would affect the likelihood of the outcome.

For the purposes of evaluation, the inventory of outcomes and the list of organisational aspects provide a framework for the design of procedures and interpretation of results.

Considering the flexibility allowed by the legislation and the official guidelines concerning work experience goals and procedures, wide variation in both practice and outcomes could be expected not only between schools but also within schools. Therefore quite apart from the considerable problems of actual measurement of outcomes, the anticipated variation of outcomes within groups and the inability to specify treatment conditions would make experimental designs extremely difficult, if not impossible, and certainly of limited value.

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The investigation of variation in practice in the light of logical contingencies between practice and outcomes therefore provides the more appropriate approach to evaluation in this case. Another consideration in deciding on this strategy was the fact that in most schools, work experience programs were very much in an experimental phase. As Light (1974) has argued, in the early stages of implementing an innovation, both successes and failures are likely, and one would inevitably mask the other in any experimental study employing measurement of outcomes and comparisons involving experimental groups which aggregate across sites at which the innovation is being tried. The more appropriate approach is to seek out sites where success is evident and attempt to determine what aspects of practice associated with implementation of the innovation at those sites appear to be factors in the success. The insights gained can be relayed to other sites, and if desired, experimental studies with hypothesis testing can be carried out at a later stage. Thus the more useful questions are not whether the innovation works everywhere, but whether it works anywhere, and why there.

Consequently, the first specific aim of the evaluation was to *examine current practice associated with the organisation of work experience programs in such a way as to provide inferences about the likely outcomes, and to identify effective practice which could guide the planning and development of programs*.

Irrespective of the organisational practices and associated school activities, the heart of a work experience program is the actual on-the-job experience itself. And this is, to a large extent, outside of the direct control of the school. Consequently, an adequate description of work experience would include information on this aspect. In particular a categorisation of the types of experience students encounter could be of use in guiding schools' practices concerning selection of work placements and their allocation to students, monitoring of students' experiences through on-site visits and student de-briefing, and communicating requirements to employers. Such a categorisation could also facilitate communication for the purposes of the study of work experience. The categorisation would be most useful if it grouped together placements which could be expected to provide similar kinds of benefits to students.

Therefore the second specific goal of the evaluation was *to provide a categorisation of the types of experience which students encounter, on-the-job, during work experience, based on the kinds of benefits which students might be expected to derive from them*.

As the evaluation progressed, it became apparent that the development of work experience programs in schools, and their integration into the schools' activities must ultimately depend on the levels of acceptance of the value of work experience among teachers, the degree of their commitment to it, and their perceptions of its proper role in relation to the other established aspects of the curriculum such as the traditional subjects. Many of the options in most of the nine organisational aspects listed in the previous section require co-operation or direct involvement of teachers of the school generally. As a straight-forward example, visiting students on-the-job may require direct participation of most teachers in the school. As long as work experience remains peripheral to the main business of the school, most teachers could be expected to make allowances or co-operate as for other school activities. On the other hand, if work experience were to move towards a more central place in the curriculum of a significant number of students, then many teachers would be required to provide active participation, and to make adjustments in the teaching of their regular subjects in terms of time allocation, or even in actual content. Teachers without a strong commitment to the concept of work experience might therefore be expected to resist its movement towards a more central place in the school's programs.

Consequently the third specific goal of the evaluation was *to determine the views of teachers on the necessity and function of work experience in the school curriculum*.

To summarise, the three specific goals of the evaluation were:

1. to examine current practice associated with the organisation of work experience programs in such a way as to provide inferences about the likely outcomes, and to identify effective practice which could guide the planning and development of programs.

2. to provide a categorisation of the types of experience which students encounter, on-the-job, during work experience, based on the kinds of benefits which students might be expected to gain from them.

3. to determine the views of teachers on the importance and necessity of work experience in the school curriculum.

3. PROCEDURES

The evaluation data collection proceeded through three stages:

1. A preliminary study was carried out in metropolitan secondary and special schools with the purpose of guiding planning in the successive stages.

2. A written survey of selected aspects of the organisation of work experience programs was conducted by mail in State high schools and secondary departments.

3. On-site investigations involving observation, collection of documents,and interviews with administrators, teachers and students, were carried out in selected secondary and special schools.

3.1 THE PRELIMINARY STUDY

During the early part of 1981, exploratory discussions were held in nine high schools and five special schools in Brisbane. Discussions were held with Principals, work experience co-ordinators, teachers, and students. A few visits were made to students on-the-job, and a selection of employers of work experience students were interviewed.

The purpose of this preliminary study was to guide the planning of the subsequent stages of the evaluation, in particular to isolate issues which seemed worthy of further study.

The results of the preliminary study were published as the First Interim Report of the Work Experience Evaluation.

Considerable variation was found among the schools with respect to the extent of work experience offered (number of students, time involved), relative emphasis among goals, place of the work experience among other school activities, and methods of organisation. The interviewees reported a wide range of benefits of work experience to students, to employers, to teachers and to the school generally. The report listed a number of issues which required further investigation:

- how can the organisational routine best be handled?
- which students should be offered work experience and how much?
- what is the place of work experience in the school's program?
- how can the benefits of work experience be maximised for all parties involved?
- how can worthwhile productive relationships between the school and the community best be fostered?

These remain general long-term issues. They provided a basis for determining which aspects of current practice warranted description, and for the selection of the specific aims of the evaluation as described in Section 2.3.

3.2 THE SURVEY OF SECONDARY SCHOOL PRACTICES

During the period May to August 1981, all State secondary schools and State schools with secondary departments were surveyed by mail in order to seek information on their current practices associated with the organisation of work experience programs, in such a way as to provide inferences about the likely outcomes. This was in pursuit of the first goal of the evaluation identified in Section 2.3. The questionnaires covered the aspects of organisations of work experience programs indicated in Section 2.2.

In addition, part of the survey was designed to gauge the response of employers to requests for participation in work experience. This was done in response to concerns expressed by some schools that resistance to work experience may be developing among some employers because of over-frequent requests from schools for placements.

3.2.1 The Survey Questionnaire

The questionnaire was built on a framework with two dimensions: the inventory of outcomes, and the list of organisational practices given in Chapter 2. The questionnaire was constructed by considering each organisational aspect in terms of the varieties of practice which might affect the likelihood of each given outcome. The lists of outcomes and organisational aspects form a two-way grid. Each cell in the grid consists of those practices which might make a particular outcome more likely or less likely.

In this way, the survey was designed to determine those aspects of organisational practice being used in schools in 1981 which would allow inference of the types of outcomes likely to be associated with the programs.

In addition, a section of the questionnaire was based on an attempt to gauge the response of employers to requests to provide work experience placements. Two indicators were chosen:

1. Schools' estimates of the proportion of employers who declined when asked to participate in 1981.
2. Schools' impressions of employers' general response to requests in terms of willingness to participate.

3.2.2 Conduct of the Survey

At the beginning of 1981, there were 138 State high schools and 68 secondary departments in Queensland. Returns to the State Work Experience Co-Ordinator for 1980 indicated that not all schools offered work experience. Therefore the population of schools for the survey was known to be fewer than 200. The preliminary study indicated considerable variety among schools in their approaches to work experience. Thus inclusion of the entire population in the survey was seen to be both expedient and desirable. Questionnaires were sent to all State high schools and secondary departments in the State.

The 1980 returns by schools to the State Work Experience Co-Ordinator, and the results of the preliminary study indicated that some schools offered more than one program, with separate programs having different goals and different patterns of organisation. For example, a school might offer a one-week long work experience with general goals to all Year 10 students, in addition to six weeks of work experience as part of a transition education course to selected Year 11 students. For this reason, the individual school program was taken as the unit of analysis, and schools were asked to complete separate questionnaires for each of their separate programs.

The survey took place in two stages:

1. An "advance details form" was first sent to school principals to determine the number of programs offered in each school.
2. On return of the advance details form, a set of questionnaires was sent to the school, one for each of the programs indicated on the form.

The information from the advance details form allowed the questionnaires to be targeted directly to the schools and programs involved. On the front of each questionnaire was written the name of the school and the program for which it was intended. The questionnaires were sent to the school principals with a request for them to be passed on to the work experience co-ordinator. A letter addressed by name to the work experience co-ordinator was attached to the questionnaires.

Where more than two programs existed in a school necessitating three or more questionnaires to be filled in, contact was made with the co-ordinator in person or by telephone to encourage co-operation. Respondents were assured that results of the survey would be reported for the State as a whole, not by individual schools. They were asked to respond in terms of the "actual practices in 1981" associated with the particular program of work experience indicated on the front of the questionnaire.

Since all schools were to be included in the survey, care was taken both in the design and administration of the questionnaires to ensure a full return. The questionnaires were made simple to complete. Responses for most questions were ticks in boxes. Information requested was limited to what should have been in the immediate possession of the respondents. Questions were grouped logically into 19 items with space for comments. Grouping was done to allow parallel forms of items and responses wherever possible. Wording was made simple and unambiguous. Completion of the questionnaire took about 15 minutes.

Mailing out of questionnaires began in May 1981 and was completed early in August. Respondents were requested to return the questionnaires by a month after the mail-out date. About three-quarters of the schools returned their questionnaires on schedule. A follow-up letter or telephone call prompted returns from about half of the remainder. Second and third reminders by telephone were necessary in a few cases, and return was complete by mid-September. One questionnaire was not received in return.

3.3 THE ON-SITE INVESTIGATIONS

During the period July to October 1981, on-site investigations were carried out in State high schools and secondary departments.

Two studies were carried out simultaneously. One study consisted of interviews with Principals, Work Experience Co-Ordinators, and teaching staff in schools where work experience was offered. This study covered the types of organisational practices in use and staff views on work experience. The other study consisted of interviews with students in the same schools, and covered the types of experiences students had while on-the-job in the work experience programs.

Nineteen State high schools and five secondary departments were selected for the study. The selection was made to provide a variety of types of program; a mix of metropolitan, small-town, and rural; and a range of school sizes. Schools were included from seven of Queensland's nine educational regions. Each school was visited for a day by two investigators. One investigator interviewed the school Principal, the co-ordinator of work experience in the school, and a number of teachers (about five); and also collected various documents related to the work experience programs. The other investigator interviewed about six students who had taken part in the work experience programs of each school.

The interviewees were selected by the school Principals, who were asked to make available students who had participated in work experience, and teachers, some who had and some who had not been involved in work experience activities. In all, 25 work experience co-ordinators, 119 students, and over 100 teachers were interviewed in the 25 schools.

The method of selection of interviewees was not likely to provide a sample which is representative of the State as a whole, so inferences to hypothetical populations of schools, students or teachers must be made with care. On the other hand, the responses of the interviewees do provide a good indication of the *range* of responses which might be found in a more extensive set of interviews, and general trends in the responses provide a good indication of general trends throughout the State system.

3.3.1 Organisational Practices and Staff Views

The interviews with school staff and collections of documents served two purposes:

1. to complement the mail survey by adding descriptive details to the findings on organisational practices. This was in pursuit of the first goal of the evaluation as identified in Section 2.3;
2. to describe and evaluate teachers' perceptions of the importance and necessity of work experience in the school curriculum. This was in pursuit of the second goal of the evaluation as identified in Section 2.3.

Two lists of mostly open-ended questions were used to guide the interviewer: one for the co-ordinator of work experience in the school, the other for teachers generally. Each interview lasted from 20 to 40 minutes.

The questions were designed to gather

(1) Information on practical details of organisation, including:
- selection and role of co-ordinators;
- allocation of job placements to students;
- employer-school contacts;
- student-employer interaction;
- on-site visits to students during work experience;
- pre- and post-work experience activities; and
- documents related to administration and evaluation.

(2) Opinions and perceptions of co-ordinators and teachers concerning:
- the importance and necessity of work experience as an educational component of the curriculum;
- the benefits of work experience;
- the duration of work experience;
- the level of staff support for work experience;
- the participation of employers; and
- the participation of students.

3.3.2 Students' Experiences On-the-Job

The interviews with students had the purpose of reconstructing each student's most recent work experience in order to determine what students actually did during work experience, and what they learned. This was in pursuit of the third goal of the evaluation as identified in Section 2.3.

Aspects covered in the interviews included:
- types of work done;
- level of participation in the work;
- contribution made;
- responsibility taken;
- skills obtained;
- likes and dislikes;
- problems experienced;
- benefits obtained;
- what was learned;
- social interaction; and
- attitude to work experience.

The interviews closely followed a prepared list of questions. Each session occupied about 30 minutes. Generally students' answers were taken at face value, with probing used only to clarify statements made. Each subject's responses were recorded on a separate interview schedule consisting of the list of questions with spaces for the interviewer's summary of the subject's responses.

A categorisation of job placements was made on the basis of the interview data. The categorisation was intended to provide a guide for discussion of work experience, especially in planning of programs, briefing employers as to desirable experiences, and monitoring students' experiences by means of on-site visits to workplaces or debriefing of students on return from work experience. The categories required were groups of placements with apparently similar potential learning outcomes.

The categorisation was made as follows. Firstly, the interview schedules completed by the interviewer for each subject were examined for commonalities, and a trial categorisation of types of work experience placements was devised. Each schedule was then assigned to one of the trial categories. After considering ambiguous cases, the categorisation was revised and the schedules reassigned to the new categories. This was repeated three times. The final categories are described in the Fourth Interim Report of the Work Experience Evaluation, and in Chapter 6 of this Report.

3.4 SUMMARY

Following preliminary field work designed to guide subsequent planning, the evaluation procedures took part in two stages:

1. A mail survey of all State high schools and secondary departments. Schools' practices with respect to various aspects of organisation were covered in the questionnaire.

2. A series of on-site investigations:
   (a) a study of secondary work experience practices to complement the mail survey;
   (b) interviews with secondary teachers to determine their views as to the necessity and function of work experience in the school curriculum;
   (c) interviews with students about their most recent work experiences in order to provide a categorisation of work placements based on potential benefits to students.

4. RESULTS OF THE SURVEY OF SECONDARY SCHOOL PRACTICES

This chapter contains the results of the mail survey described in Section 3.2. The survey was aimed at part of the first goal of the evaluation: to examine current practice associated with the organisation of work experience in such a way as to provide inferences about the likely outcomes. The findings of the survey are complemented by the findings of the on-site investigation presented in Chapter 5. The survey included all government secondary schools and secondary departments in Queensland. Questionnaires were completed by all except one school.

Eighty per cent of the schools reported offering programs of work experience in 1981: 123 of the 138 high schools, and 42 of the 68 secondary departments. Forty-one of the schools returned questionnaires for two programs, four for three programs, and one school for four programs, making a total of 217 questionnaires returned.

In the analysis which follows, responses are reported in most cases according to the type of program. Where relevant, some results are reported according to year levels in which programs were offered, or types of school (high school or secondary department).

To reduce confusion, actual frequencies are shown in tables, but not percentages. Since the total number of cases is just over 200, rough percentages of the total number of programs can be obtained by halving the frequencies.

As to be expected in this type of study, the descriptions apply to the aggregate, and the nature of individual programs is obscured in the overall picture.

4.1 TYPES OF PROGRAMS OFFERED

For the purposes of the evaluation, work experience programs were placed in three categories:

A. General programs in which work experience was offered to all or most of the students in a particular year level.

B. Programs associated with special transition education courses for selected students.

C. Subject-oriented programs associated with the teaching of a particular subject such as social studies or vocational subjects.

Type A (general) programs accounted for 110 of the returns, Type B (transition) programs for 82, and Type C (special subjects) for 25. In the *high schools*, 78 Type A, 71 Type B and 25 Type C programs were reported.

Most of the general or Type A programs were offered in Year 10, while most of the transition programs were offered in Years 11 and 12. The distribution of programs according to type and year level is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Number of Work Experience Programs by Type of Program and Year Level

Type of Program	Number of Programs in Year Levels							Total Programs
	10	11	12	10+11	11+12	10+12	10+11+12	
Type A (general)	71	10	8	1	7	2	11	110
Type B (transition)	26	43	2	0	10	0	1	82
Type C (special subject)	6	8	2	0	8	0	1	25
Total	103	61	12	1	25	2	13	217

4.2 NUMBERS OF STUDENTS

The number of students involved in Type A programs was 10 637, and in Type B programs 2 210. Thus even though the numbers of Type A and Type B programs were similar (110 and 82), the Type A programs involved almost five times as many students. Considering the high schools separately, 48 of the 71 Type B programs each had fewer than 30 students, whereas 42 of the 78 Type A programs had 100 or more students (one had 450).

Type C programs were offered in 25 schools and involved 935 students. Most of the programs were related to Manual Arts or business subjects (20 cases). One was related to a special Social Studies unit. The other four cases were related to English and/or Citizenship Education, and could possibly have been better categorised as Type B programs for selected students in Year 10.

Table 2 shows the distribution of programs according to the numbers of students in the program expressed as a percentage of the numbers of students enrolled in year levels in which the program was offered.

Table 2: Number of Programs of Each Type by Percentage of Students at the Year Level in the Program

Type of Program	Per Cent of Students at Year Level(s) in Program					Total Programs
	0%–20%	21%–40%	41%–60%	61%–80%	81%–100%	
Type A Programs	3	6	6	10	85	110
Type B Programs	44	26	4	2	6	82
Type C Programs	17	8	0	0	0	25
Total Programs	64	40	10	12	91	217

Most Type A programs, as expected, involved more than 80% of the students in the year levels concerned. In other words, most of the students took advantage of the opportunity for work experience where Type A programs were offered. About half of the Type B programs involved 20% or fewer of the students in the year level concerned. The Type B programs involving more than 80% of the students were provided in secondary departments of State schools in rural areas.

About half (39) of the Type B programs were in schools where no other program was offered. Most of these (29) involved fewer than 30 students each. Including all three types of program only 28 of the 165 schools offered a single program involving 20% or fewer of the students in the relevant year levels. Some of these were probably trial or pilot programs.

Therefore in most of the schools where work experience was offered, it was *not* confined to a small minority of the students.

4.3 EXTENT OF WORK EXPERIENCE OFFERED

Work experience is permitted under State legislation in blocks of up to 10 days at a time to a maximum of 30 days per year. Item 1 on the questionnaire required respondents to indicate the number and lengths of blocks of work experience offered in the programs concerned. Table 3 shows the patterns of work experience indicated in the responses for each program type.

19880—4

Table 3: Number of Programs of Each Type by Number and Length of Blocks of Work Experience

Number and Length of Blocks	Number of Programs			
	Type A Programs	Type B Programs	Type C Programs	Total Programs
One block of one week	73	29	15	117
Two blocks of one week	8	8	2	18
Three blocks of one week	0	2	0	2
One block of two weeks	18	10	7	35
Two blocks of two weeks	3	8	0	11
Three blocks of two weeks	0	10	0	10
Day release	4	5	0	9
Varies with students' needs	0	0	0	0
Other	4	10	1	15
Total Programs	110	82	25	217

For the Type A programs, 91 of the 110 involved a single block of either one or two weeks. Where more than one week was offered in Type A programs, the predominant pattern was for the two weeks to be taken as a single block (18 cases) rather than as two blocks (8 cases).

For the Type B programs, the single block was less predominant. About half (39) involved single blocks of one or two weeks, about one-third (28) involved two or three blocks. For the Type C programs, 22 of the 25 were single blocks of one or two weeks.

Twenty-one of the Type A programs covered more than one year level (as shown in Table 1). In these cases, students could expect to have more than one work experience over successive school years. For most students however, work experience in 1981 was a one-shot affair. Unless a student had very clear career goals, the single experience would not seem to be appropriate for deciding among potential job choices. Neither would it, alone, give good indications of various conditions of employment or types of work. On the other hand, for goals such as social development or general orientation to working life, a single experience might make a significant contribution.

Even in the transition (Type B) programs, students in many schools (39 of 82) had a single work experience. However, 10 programs were offered in both Years 11 and 12, and responses to Question 8 indicated that at least a quarter of the students in 24 of the transition programs had work experience in previous years. Nonetheless, for the majority of students, the one-shot experience was the case. In Type B programs, which would be expected to emphasise the goals of increasing employment chances and easing the school-work transition, the value of a single block of work experience could be questioned.

4.4 ASSOCIATED SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Item 4 on the questionnaire required respondents to indicate the extent to which regular class time was set aside for activities related to work experience. The responses give indications of whether attempts were being made to integrate work experience with the regular curriculum, or to allow it to remain an adjunct.

In 49 of the cases (23%), respondents reported that little or no class time was spent on activities related to work experience.

Where class time was allocated to work experience activities, the predominant pattern was inclusion of units in regular subjects. This would be expected in Type C programs. Type A programs, offered mostly in Year 10, might have been expected to work within the regular subjects and avoid taking time away from the Board Junior list of subjects. Type B programs, offered mostly in Years 11 and 12, might have been expected to set up special courses for the transition classes for non-matriculation students and get away from the traditional types of subjects. Surprisingly, there was little difference between Type A and Type B programs. Additional analysis showed that, taking both Type A and Type B programs together:

- 78 programs used units in regular subjects;
- 44 programs used special courses; and
- 32 programs used both.

Apparently, in most schools work experience was bringing changes to the school curriculum, both by affecting the content of regular subjects, and by transferring time away from them into new courses.

Table 4: Responses to Question 4: "In some schools, regular class time is set aside for activities specifically related to work experience. What is the practice in your school with respect to this program? (More than one may apply)", by type of program.

Pattern of Classroom Activity Associated with Work Experience	Number of Programs Using the Pattern			
	Type A	Type B	Type C	Total Responses
(a) Special units related to work experience are included in certain regular subjects	57	52	17	126
(b) A special course or series of classes related to work experience is provided for students in this program	44	31	2	77
(c) Other provision is made	11	7	3	21
(d) Little or no class time is taken up with activities related to work experience	26	13	10	49
Total Programs*	110	82	25	217

* More than one pattern may be associated with a given program, so rows add to totals, but not columns.

Table 5 shows the subjects indicated by the respondents to include special units associated with work experience. In all three types of program, English, Citizenship, Social Studies, and Business/Clerical Studies bore most of the responsibility for activities related to work experience.

Item 5 on the questionnaire required respondents to indicate whether various activities were major or minor aspects, or were not covered in the school activities associated with the work experience program. Responses to this item gave indications of the type of outcomes schools intended or expected from the work experience programs, and the extent to which the various opportunities offered by work experience were being exploited.

On the previous item, 49 responses indicated that little or no class time was taken up with activities related to work experience, but most of these did show responses to Item 5. These cases are excluded from the following analysis. Table 6 shows the responses to Item 5 for each type of program.

Table 5: Number of Programs of Each Type with Special Units Related to Work Experience in Regular Subjects, by Subject Groups

Subject Groups	Numbers of Programs with Special Units in Subject Group			
	Type A	Type B	Type C	Total
English	37	26	4	67
Mathematics	8	10	0	18
Citizenship	30	14	4	48
Social Studies	5	14	2	21
Home Economics	4	6	0	10
Manual Arts	8	7	5	20
Business/Clerical	20	14	8	42
Guidance/Careers	2	12	0	14
Other	1	5	0	6
Total Programs*	55	54	16	125

* More than one subject group may be associated with a given program so rows add to totals, but not columns.

Table 6 indicates that the activities most frequently indicated as "major aspects" of classroom activities related to work experience were:

- development of social skills (e.g. courtesy, co-operation, seeking help);
- training in job acquisition skills (e.g. interviews, applications); and
- provision of information and guidance about jobs or careers.

Less frequently indicated as "major" or frequently indicated as "minor" were:

- self evaluation activities in relation to possible job or career choices;
- personal development (e.g. confidence, overcoming shyness);
- training in general work skills and habits (e.g. following instructions, safety); and
- individual counselling and support directly related to work experience.

Most frequently indicated as "minor aspect" or "not an aspect" were:

- training in particular job skills (e.g. answering telephone, making change, vocational skills);
- sharing of experiences among students (e.g. videotapes, discussions, presentations);
- study of specific aspects of work (e.g. working conditions, pay, union membership);
- training in work-related independence skills (e.g. travel, budget); and
- general study of work in a social context (e.g. work roles, industrial relations).

For the Type B programs, more aspects were more frequently considered as major than for the Type A programs. Also, "training in particular job skills" and "training in work-related independence skills" were given higher emphasis for the Type B programs than for the Type A. For Type C programs, "training in particular job skills" had proportionally more major ratings than for the other types, as might be expected.

Table 6: Responses to Question 5: "Below is a list of school activities which could be associated with a work experience program. Would each of these be considered a major aspect, a minor aspect, or not an aspect of this program?", by type of program, excluding cases where little or no class time was indicated on Question 4.

Types of School Activities Associated with Work Experience Programs	Program Type	Responses			
		Major Aspect	Minor Aspect	Not an Aspect	Total Responses
(a) Training in job-acquisition skills (e.g. interviews, applications)	A	55	24	3	82
	B	58	9	1	68
	C	9	5	1	15
(b) Provision of information and guidance about jobs or careers	A	54	27	2	83
	B	53	14	1	68
	C	9	5	1	15
(c) Training in general work skills and habits (e.g. following instructions, safety)	A	42	31	10	83
	B	44	23	1	68
	C	14	1	0	15
(d) Training in particular job skills (e.g. answering telephone, making change, vocational skills)	A	21	47	15	83
	B	37	26	5	68
	C	11	3	0	14
(e) Self-evaluation activities in relation to possible job or career choices	A	45	34	4	83
	B	42	21	5	68
	C	6	9	0	15
(f) Training in work-related independence skills (e.g. travel, budget)	A	11	45	27	83
	B	30	37	11	68
	C	3	7	5	15
(g) Individual counselling and support directly related to work experience	A	32	41	10	83
	B	40	26	2	68
	C	7	5	3	15
(h) Sharing of experiences among students (e.g. videotapes, discussions, presentations)	A	33	35	15	83
	B	29	31	8	68
	C	7	6	2	15
(i) Development of social skills (e.g. courtesy, co-operation, seeking help)	A	60	19	5	84
	B	56	12	0	68
	C	13	2	0	15
(j) Personal development (e.g. confidence, overcoming shyness)	A	41	35	7	83
	B	46	19	3	68
	C	14	1	0	15
(k) Study of specific aspects of work (e.g. working conditions, pay, union membership)	A	24	44	15	83
	B	25	34	9	68
	C	9	3	3	15
(l) General study of work in a social context (e.g. work roles, industrial relations)	A	12	47	25	84
	B	22	31	14	67
	C	4	7	4	15
(m) Other activities (please specify below)	A	4	1	3	8
	B	4	1	1	6
	C	0	1	0	1

For all programs generally, the emphasis in related school activities seemed to be firmly placed on job choice and acquisition, with a stress on development of social skills (probably employment related). Little emphasis was placed on the study of work itself. This may indicate a weakness in many programs. Counselling and support for individual students was generally a minor aspect. Possibly this was left to the home in most cases. The lack of emphasis on sharing of experiences is surprising in view of the finding that most students had a single work experience only. The wide variation likely to be encountered by different students in such things as type of work and working conditions would seem to make sharing valuable, and worthy of greater emphasis.

4.5 INVOLVEMENT OF SCHOOL STAFF

Item 6 on the questionnaire required respondents to indicate which personnel assisted co-ordinators in the following activities in the work experience program:

(a) initial contacting of employers;
(b) briefing of employers prior to work experience;
(c) counselling of individual students concerning work experience;
(d) arranging work placements for individual students;
(e) consulting parents with respect to work experience;
(f) visiting students at the work place; and
(g) planning and policy making with reference to work experience.

In programs involving large numbers of students, the work experience co-ordinator would need to have the assistance of other staff members. Even in small programs however, there are benefits to be gained from wide staff involvement.

Among the possible outcomes of work experience, those of potential benefit to teachers include:

- personal and social development (through working relationships with adults outside the school environment);
- improved knowledge and understanding of students;
- better understanding of the non-academic world; and
- increased relevance of teaching.

Possible outcomes of potential benefit to schools include:

- improved teacher-student relationships and better school climate; and
- better school-community relationships.

Realisation of such benefits would require wide involvement of school staff in the work experience exercise, except that some administrators might feel that school-community relationships are better safeguarded by keeping school-employer contacts at the "top" or administrator level.

Respondents were given seven response options for each activity in Question 6, with the possibility of indicating more than one of the options. In the analysis, the various possible response combinations were grouped into five categories:

1. Co-ordinator only involved, or co-ordinator assisted by Principal or non-professional staff.
2. Specialist teachers involved, such as guidance or resource teachers, but not other teachers.
3. Teachers of associated courses involved, but not other teachers.
4. As many teachers as needed involved.
5. As many teachers as possible involved.

Table 7 shows the responses to Question 6 in each of these categories, according to the type of program.

Table 7: Number of Programs of Each Type by Level of Staff Involvement in Activities Related to Organising Work Experience

Activity Associated with Work Experience	NUMBER OF PROGRAMS						
		Level of Involvement of School Staff					
	Program Type	Co-Ordinator and/or Principal, non-Professionals	Specialist Teachers Assist	Teachers of Associated Courses Assist	As many teachers as Needed Assist	As many teachers as Possible Assist	Total Programs
Initial contacting of employers	A	44	2	18	25	21	110
	B	38	7	19	12	6	82
	C	7	1	10	1	6	25
Briefing of employers prior to work experience	A	46	6	14	26	17	109
	B	43	8	17	9	5	82
	C	7	1	11	1	5	25
Counselling of individual students	A	22	12	30	24	19	107
	B	18	15	34	10	4	82
	C	4	1	17	0	3	25
Arranging work placements	A	50	7	18	21	14	110
	B	36	8	26	9	2	81
	C	6	0	15	0	4	25
Consulting parents	A	67	15	12	14	1	109
	B	55	7	14	2	3	81
	C	12	2	10	0	1	25
Visiting students at the work place	A	13	3	17	38	38	109
	B	20	3	31	15	10	79
	C	3	2	12	2	5	24
Planning and policy making	A	30	17	18	20	20	105
	B	22	5	33	11	9	79
	C	8	1	13	1	2	25

The following conclusions can be made with respect to the level of staff involvement in work experience organisation:

(a) *For the Type A programs:* The widest staff involvement was in visiting students at the work place. About one-third of the programs involved "as many teachers as needed" and a further third "as many teachers as possible". Most of the other activities involved as many teachers as needed or as possible in from 30% to 40% of the cases. Activities involving contact with employers were handled exclusively by the co-ordinator or administration in more than 40% of the programs.

(b) *For the Type B programs:* In more than half of the programs activities involving contact with employers were handled exclusively by the co-ordinator or administration. Where other teachers were involved, teachers of associated courses usually assisted. Teachers other than these assisted in visiting students at the work place in about one-third of the cases.

(c) *For the Type C programs:* For most of the activities, about half of the Type C programs involved teachers of associated courses. In about one-third of the cases, other teachers assisted in the initial contacting of employers and visiting students at the work place.

As a general finding, in close to half of the cases, the burden of most organisational aspects of work experience rested heavily on the shoulders of the work experience co-ordinators. On the other hand, for the activities other than *consulting parents*, a majority of the schools had involved other members of staff. Nonetheless, fewer than one quarter of the programs involved "as many teachers as possible" in any activity related to work experience.

The activity involving staff most widely was visiting students on the job. Such visits can serve various functions. Programs concerned with school-community relations could be expected to emphasise thanking employers for their contribution. Concern for the present welfare of the students would lead to emphasis on support and protection. Programs concerned with student growth and development might emphasise evaluation of students' progress. Programs with well-defined goals for work experience could be expected to emphasise advice and guidance of employers.

Item 7 required respondents to indicate the relative emphasis placed on various functions of visits by school staff to students' work places during work experience. The results are shown in Table 8.

The following conclusions may be drawn from Table 8 concerning on-the-job visits by school staff to students:

- Little difference among the three types of program is evident.
- "Safeguard students' well being" was the aspect most frequently indicated as minor or not a consideration. This could imply a high level of trust of employers on the part of many of the schools. Ultimately, the school must be responsible for the student during a school activity.
- Few of the respondents indicated any of the aspects as "not a function", and relatively few as "minor function". The survey provides no information however on how the functions were carried out in practical terms.

Table 8: Responses to Question 7: "What relative emphasis is placed on each of the following functions during school visits by school staff to students' work places during work experience?", by type of program.

Functions of Visits by School Staff to Students' Work Place during Work Experience	Program Type	Responses			
		Major Function	Minor Function	Not a Function	Total
(a) Advise, support, encourage students	A	86	17	2	105
	B	67	10	3	80
	C	21	2	1	24
(b) Evaluate students' progress	A	64	35	8	107
	B	53	23	4	80
	C	11	10	3	24
(c) Consult, advise, assist employers	A	70	32	5	107
	B	56	21	3	80
	C	11	10	3	24
(d) Acknowledge, thank employers	A	87	19	1	107
	B	66	13	1	80
	C	20	1	1	22
(e) Safeguard students' well being	A	53	44	10	107
	B	46	22	11	79
	C	10	11	3	24

The two aspects most frequently indicated as major functions were

- "acknowledge, thank employers"
- "advise, support, encourage students".

These indicate an emphasis on informal interpersonal interaction to ensure smooth running. Fewer respondents, (but still more than two-thirds) indicated as major functions the corresponding but more structured aspects

- "consult, advise, assist employers"
- "evaluate students' progress".

In general terms, the visit to students at the work place was apparently an important aspect of work experience with complex purposes, which involved large numbers of teachers.

4.6 ALLOCATION OF WORK PLACEMENTS TO STUDENTS

Item 9 on the questionnaire required respondents to indicate to what extent the following factors were considered in allocating students to employers:

(a) Students' stated preferences
(b) Students' abilities in relation to possible placements
(c) Employers' specifications of types of student or levels of qualifications
(d) Individual student's current needs or level of development
(e) Likelihood that placement may lead to permanent employment with that employer
(f) Suitability of placement to goals of particular unit, course or subject
(g) Match with student's probable future type of career or job
(h) Difference from student's future career or way of life.

The possible responses to each were:

- primary consideration;
- secondary consideration; and
- not a consideration.

Programs oriented towards finding employment for students might be expected to emphasise students' abilities, employers' specifications, and likelihood of employment. Programs aimed at assisting students to make vocational choices might be expected to emphasise students' preferences and match with future career. Programs oriented towards transition goals such as personal and social development might be expected to emphasise students' abilities, individual needs, and match with future career. Programs emphasising general education goals might be expected to emphasise current individual needs, or perhaps difference from future way of life. Type C programs could be expected to emphasise suitability to goals of a course. Recruitment benefits to employers seem to require emphasis on student's abilities, employers' specifications, and students' probable future career.

The responses to Item 9 are shown in Table 9.

Table 9: Responses to Question 9: "To what extent are the following factors considered in allocating students to employers in this program?", by program type.

Factors Considered in Allocating Students to Employers	Program Type	Responses			
		Primary Consideration	Secondary Consideration	Not a Consideration	Total
(a) Students' stated preferences	A	102	8	0	110
	B	69	12	0	81
	C	20	3	2	25
(b) Students' abilities in relation to possible placements	A	59	47	4	110
	B	59	22	0	81
	C	15	8	1	24
(c) Employers' specifications of types of student or levels of qualifications	A	51	39	16	106
	B	34	30	15	79
	C	10	6	9	25
(d) Individual students' current needs or level of development	A	43	50	12	105
	B	51	24	6	81
	C	10	12	3	25
(e) Likelihood that placement may lead to permanent employment with that employer	A	7	47	54	108
	B	10	33	36	79
	C	2	10	13	25
(f) Suitability of placement to goals of particular unit, course or subject	A	11	28	68	107
	B	12	36	32	80
	C	10	11	4	25
(g) Match with students' probable future type of career or job	A	38	52	20	110
	B	37	32	12	81
	C	11	11	3	25
(h) Difference from student's future career or way of life	A	6	38	62	106
	B	11	23	45	79
	C	0	9	16	25

Only 25 of the programs did not employ "students' stated preferences" as a primary consideration in allocating placements. For 26 of the programs, this was the only consideration indicated as primary. In most programs, students' preferences and one or more other considerations were indicated as primary.

Four of the factors were reported as primary or secondary considerations with roughly equal frequency, and rarely as not a consideration:

- students' abilities in relation to possible placements;
- employers' specifications of types of student or level of qualification;
- individual student's current needs or level of development; and
- match with students' probable future type of career or job.

The remaining three factors were infrequently shown as primary considerations, but indicated as not a consideration in about half of the cases:

- likelihood that placement may lead to permanent employment with that employer;
- suitability of placement to goals of particular unit, course or subject; and
- difference from student's future career or way of life.

For Type B programs separately, higher proportions than for Types A and C of *major consideration* responses were given to factors (b), (d), (e), (f) and (g), indicating that more factors are taken into account in transition programs than in the others. "Students' abilities" formed a primary consideration in about three quarters of the Type B programs.

For Type C programs, as expected, the factor "suitability of placement to goals of particular unit or subject" was more frequently shown as a consideration than for the other types.

The general pattern seems to have been allocation according to students' stated preferences with a check made by the school on the reality of the choice in relation to the students' abilities or probable vocational future. The indication is that most programs were primarily oriented towards exposure to likely future life patterns. This may be compatible with social/personal development goals in that it would provide a realistic, appropriate milieu for achievement of such goals. The programs seem to have been aimed at giving students a "taste" of the type of working life they could probably expect after leaving school.

The extent to which schools are able to place students according to their choices would be an indicator of a lack of scarcity of work placements, because the practice assumes a large pool of jobs of a variety as wide as students' choices, or at least many more jobs than students so that choice is possible.

4.7 EMPLOYER PARTICIPATION

4.7.1 Employer Response

Items 10, 11, and 12 on the questionnaire dealt with employers' responses to requests to participate in work experience. Respondents were asked to indicate the percentage of employers who declined to participate or renew their participation in the program, and to describe the co-operation of employers generally.

Item 10 asked "Approximately, what percentage of employers who were approached for the first time in 1981 declined to participate in this program?" The responses were as follows:

(a)	Fewer than 1%	89
(b)	1% to 5%	55
(c)	6% to 10%	18
(d)	More than 10%	13
(e)	Does not apply	39
	TOTAL RESPONSES	214

Item 11 asked "Approximately, what percentage of employers who had participated in this program in previous years declined when asked to participate again in 1981?" The responses were as follows:

(a)	Fewer than 1%	101
(b)	1% to 5%	34
(c)	6% to 10%	5
(d)	More than 10%	0
(e)	Does not apply	73
	TOTAL RESPONSES	213

Item 12 asked "How would you describe the co-operation of employers generally in this program?" The responses were as follows:

(a)	Eager to participate	88
(b)	Pleased to participate	82
(c)	Willing to participate	36
(d)	Hesitant to participate	0
(e)	Reluctant to participate	2
	TOTAL RESPONSES	208

No great variation occurred in these items with program type, year level, or school type.

Taken together, the results to these three items indicate a very high level of co-operation in work experience by employers. There are valid reasons why employers may decline to participate in a work experience program on a given occasion. A positive response to more than 90% of requests must be considered very high, and this level was surpassed in most cases on the first request, and in all cases on return requests. The response to Question 12 leaves little doubt that employers generally were more than willing to participate in work experience programs.

4.7.2 Employer Briefings

Items 14 and 15 dealt with the briefing of employers prior to work experience. Item 14 required respondents to indicate which of a list of aspects were covered in such briefings. Item 15 required respondents to indicate which of a list of types of experience employers were asked to provide. Programs emphasising personal development, especially for students "at risk", could be expected to stress individual students' needs in employer briefings, and request support and encouragement or careful supervision in the work experience. Programs emphasising job selection could be expected

to request a variety of experiences, or observation. Programs emphasising learning about work or programs tied to particular subjects could be expected to cover schools' suggestions in briefings, and request observation and variety. Programs emphasising transition to work or acquisition of employment could be expected to request a realistic simulation, or specific training and experience. Schools concerned with school-community relations, or with making schooling more relevant to working life, could be expected to cover employers' suggestions in briefings.

The results to items on briefing employers are shown in Tables 10 and 11.

Table 10: Responses to Question 14: "Which of the following aspects are covered in briefing of employers? (more than one may apply)", by program type.

Aspects Covered in Briefing of Employers by Schools	Number of Respondents Indicating Aspect Covered			Total Responses
	Program Type			
	A	B	C	
(a) The goals of the work experience program	108	79	25	212
(b) The particular goals and needs of each student placed with the employer	39	49	9	97
(c) The employer's suggestions or ideas about appropriate activities or experiences	74	60	14	148
(d) The school's suggestions or recommendations about appropriate activities or experiences	55	44	16	115
(e) Other	3	7	0	10
Total Programs*	110	82	25	217

* More than one aspect may be indicated for a given program, so rows add to totals, but not columns.

Tables 10 and 11 yield the following conclusions about briefing by schools of employers:

- Almost all of the respondents indicated that briefings of employers covered the goals of work experience. For the Type A programs however, the responses to the other aspects indicate that interpretation of these goals was left to the employer in most cases.

- For both the Types A and B programs, more respondents indicated that employers' suggestions were discussed than schools' suggestions. Apparently in a fair number of schools, the co-ordinator was content to leave the employer to decide appropriate experiences for the student. This may indicate either a recognition that employers have a valid contribution to make in deciding appropriate educational activities for students, or a concern for "public relations".

- For Type A, only 39 respondents indicated that employer briefings covered the particular goals and needs of each student placed with the employer. This represents 35% of the Type A programs. By contrast, individual students goals and needs were reported as being discussed in 60% of the Type B programs and 54% of the Type C programs. This probably indicates more opportunity for individual attention in the smaller Type B and C programs than the larger Type A, as well as an appropriate emphasis on personal development goals in these programs.

- There was little difference on average among the three program types with respect to the types of experience employers were asked to provide.

- By far the predominant type of experience requested was "a realistic simulation of employment".

- "Observation of various aspects of the work place" and "a variety of experiences" seem somewhat incompatible with a realistic simulation of employment, but both of these aspects were indicated by more than two-thirds of the respondents. Possibly schools called for different types of experience for different students. The more interesting figures may therefore be that about 20% of the respondents did not report asking for a variety of experiences, and 34% did not report asking for observation of various aspects, giving an indication of the actual level of strict simulation requested.

- "Support and encouragement for the student, or careful supervision" was asked for by 63% of the respondents. This too may be incompatible with a realistic simulation, but also may not apply to all students placed by the schools concerned.

- Specific training or experience were not frequently requested, even for the Type C programs.

These findings could be interpreted in two ways: either most schools did not have clear ideas of particular types of work experience which were suitable for their programs, or else they were requesting different types of experience for different students.

Table 11: Responses to Question 15: "What types of experience are employers asked to provide? (more than one may apply)", by program type.

Types of Experience Requested of Employers by School	Number of Respondents Indicating Type Requested			Total Responses
	Program Type			
	A	B	C	
(a) A realistic simulation of employment (treat students as regular employees)	103	77	25	205
(b) Specific training or assistance (e.g. use of a procedure, or specific skills)	28	28	5	61
(c) Specific experience (e.g. use of a machine or procedure)	33	29	5	67
(d) Support and encouragement for the student, or careful supervision	71	54	12	137
(e) A variety of experiences	87	65	20	172
(f) Observation of various aspects of the work place	71	56	15	142
(g) Other	3	1	0	4
Total Programs*	110	81	25	216

* More than one type of experience may be indicated for a given program, so rows add to totals, but not columns.

4.8 STUDENT EVALUATION

The aspects of students' progress which are evaluated can be taken to indicate the relative emphasis among goals of work experience. For example, programs oriented towards employment preparation could be expected to emphasise evaluation of work habits such as industry or punctuality, and programs oriented towards wider growth (social and personal development) could be expected to emphasise evaluation of students' progress in those areas.

Respondents were asked to indicate who was requested for evaluation reports on students (item 16), what aspects were covered in such reports (item 17), and what were the main functions of such reports (item 18). For item 16: "Who is requested for reports (verbal or written) on students' progress during work experience?", the results were as follows:

(a)	Teacher	107
(b)	Employer	201
(c)	Parent	25
(d)	No reports	9
	TOTAL	214

About twice as many respondents indicated calling for reports from employers than from teachers. This bears out the results of item 7, in which evaluation of students' progress was not shown to be a function of teachers' visits to students on the job in many cases. Requesting evaluation from employers was almost universal.

In the usual school setting, the teacher is in an evaluative role. Therefore a significant aspect of work experience may be that it puts employers in the evaluative role allowing teachers to take a supportive role, placing teachers in a new relationship with students.

Item 17 asked which aspects of students' progress reports cover. Responses are shown in Table 12 for each program type.

Table 12 allows the following conclusions with respect to evaluation of students:

- Reports on students' progress were very comprehensive, in almost all cases covering work habits and social development.
- Specific work skills were evaluated in fewer than half of the programs (even for Type C programs).
- Only about one-quarter of the respondents indicated evaluation of educational progress. Apparently in most cases, work experience gives students a rest from school-type learning – possibly one of its advantages.
- Although most respondents required evaluation of work habits, only about half of those called for evaluation of suitability for the type of job, but this function would seem to be important to programs emphasising vocational or career choice. Evidence from other questions such as 1 and 5, taken together with this finding, may indicate that while career selection may have been an important goal in most programs, in fact it was considered less important than general preparation for working life, or social development.

Item 18 required respondents to indicate the main functions of reports on students' progress. Results are shown in Table 13.

Table 12: Responses to Question 17: "Which aspects of students progress do such reports (on students' progress during work experience) cover? (more than one may apply)", by program type.

Aspects Covered in Reports on Students' Progress During Work Experience	Number Indicating Aspect Covered			Total Responses
	Program Type			
	A	B	C	
(a) Work habits (e.g. punctuality, industry)	106	79	24	209
(b) Social development (e.g. mixing with adults, co-operation, courtesy)	103	75	21	199
(c) Personal development (e.g. confidence, responsibility)	91	73	21	185
(d) Personal attributes (e.g. grooming, neatness)	92	67	19	178
(e) Educational progress (e.g. learning about commerce, industry)	24	21	8	53
(f) Specific work skills (e.g. typing, safety practices)	38	38	9	85
(g) Suitability for the type of job	53	42	10	105
Total Programs*	109	79	24	212

* More than one aspect may be indicated for a given program, so rows add to totals, but not columns.

In general, the aspects covered in students' progress reports do not seem to be consistent with the functions of the reports indicated by most of the respondents. Assessments of students' "work habits", which was most often indicated as an aspect, would seem to be most applicable to the function "information for prospective employers", but this was *not* indicated as a function of reports for almost 60% of the programs. On the other hand, assessment of "suitability for the type of job" was indicated as an aspect for only half of the programs. This would seem to be most applicable to the function "assistance in students' self evaluation in relation to possible jobs/careers", but this function was indicated by almost all of the respondents. This probably justifies the conclusion that the goals and means of assessment of students' progress in work experience were not well thought out in many schools. Another possibility is that the evaluation function (not given as an alternative in the questionnaire) was to provide students with indications of their ability to cope as workers.

Table 13 indicates that for Types B and C programs, schools claimed a wider range of functions for their evaluation than for Type A. This is particularly noticeable with respect to "input into future decisions about students' education".

Table 13: Responses to Question 18: "What are the main functions of such reports (on students' progress during work experience)? (more than one may apply)", by program type.

Functions of Reports on Students' Progress During Work Experience	Number Indicating Function			Total Responses
	Program Type			
	A	B	C	
(a) Information for prospective employers	41	39	8	88
(b) Assistance in students' self evaluation in relation to possible jobs/careers	102	77	22	201
(c) Input into future decisions about students' education	66	48	15	129
(d) Assessment of a student in a course or subject	10	28	6	44
(e) Other	7	5	1	13
Total Programs*	108	81	24	213

* More than one function may be indicated for a given program, so rows add to totals, but not columns.

4.9 CONTACT WITH PARENTS

Item 19 on the questionnaire dealt with the types of input made available to or sought from parents of work experience students. Work experience can offer a special opportunity to involve parents in their students' education. Table 14 gives the results to item 19 by Program Type.

Most of the respondents to item 19 did not indicate involvement of parents beyond keeping them informed and consulting them about job placements. Only about 10% of the respondents involved parents in planning (e.g. by committees or surveys). Work experience was not seen to warrant a special report on children's progress to parents. About one-quarter of the respondents reported that the actual assistance of parents was enlisted. Work experience may be an area in which parents could make significant contributions. Some schools were apparently exploiting this potential, but many were not.

4.10 GENERAL COMMENTS BY RESPONDENTS

Item 20 on the questionnaire invited respondents to "comment on any aspect of work experience". Fifty-nine respondents took the opportunity. With few exceptions, the comments were positive towards work experience and its various benefits.

19880—6

Table 14: Responses to Question 19: "Which of the following statements apply to involvement of parents in this program? (more than one may apply)", by program type.

Statement of Type of Involvement of Parents	Number of Respondents Indicating Statement Applies			Total Responses
	Program Type			
	A	B	C	
(a) Parents are kept informed about the program	94	70	21	185
(b) Parents are consulted about their children's job placements	68	52	13	133
(c) The physical support of parents is enlisted (e.g. assistance with clerical work, travel)	27	20	7	54
(d) Parents are involved with planning with respect to the program (e.g. on committees or by surveys)	10	6	5	21
(e) An official report is made to parents on children's progress in work experience	24	23	5	52
(f) Where possible, face-to-face contact is arranged between parents and school staff	28	25	6	59
Total Programs*	107	82	25	214

* More than one function may be indicated for a given program, so rows add to totals, but not columns.

4.11 SUMMARY

The main findings of the survey were:

- Eighty per cent of Queensland State secondary schools offered work experience in 1981.
- Three types of programs were offered:
  A. General programs offered to all students in a year level, usually Year 10 (110 programs, 10 637 students).
  B. Transition programs, usually in Year 11 (82 programs, 2 210 students).
  C. Subject-oriented programs, usually associated with vocational subjects in Years 11 or 12 (25 programs, 935 students).
- Most of the programs incorporated a single block of one or two weeks of work experience, although half of the transition programs included two or three blocks.
- In about one-quarter of the programs, little or no class time was allocated to activities related to work experience. In most of the programs, special units related to work experience were included in regular subjects, usually English, Citizenship, or vocational subjects. About one-third of the programs were offered in conjunction with special courses.

- Classroom activities related to work experience usually emphasised job choice and acquisition, as well as development of social skills. In most programs, little emphasis was placed on the study of work itself. Counselling, support for individual students, and sharing of experiences were frequently reported as minor aspects of classroom activities related to work experience.

- In close to half of the cases, the burden of most of the organisational work rested heavily on the work experience co-ordinators. A wide involvement of teachers was sought in only about one-quarter of the programs.

- Visiting students at the work place was rated as an important aspect of most programs. Such visits had complex purposes.

- The general pattern for allocating work placements to students was to assign available placements according to students' stated preferences with a check made by the school on the reality of the choice in relation to the students' abilities and probable vocational future. Most programs were apparently oriented towards exposure to likely future life patterns.

- The level of co-operation by employers was very high. In most cases, fewer than 10% declined requests to participate. Most employers were more than willing to take part. Requests to renew previous participation were seldom declined.

- In most cases, employers were asked to provide a realistic simulation of employment, but otherwise were given little direction and were seldom requested for special types of work experience.

- Almost universally, employers were requested for reports on students' progress during work experience. The reports expected were comprehensive, in almost all cases covering work habits and social development. The goals and means of assessment of students in work experience programs may not have been well thought out in many schools.

- Most of the schools did not indicate involvement of parents beyond keeping them informed and consulting them about job placements.

4.12 DISCUSSION

The results described above mainly represent a summary of ticks in boxes to pre-determined questions to provide an aggregate picture. Information about individual cases is lost in the overall summary. The richness and complexity of some individual cases, as well as the deficiencies in others, are obscured. Also, since practical details were not elicited, there is no way of knowing from the survey alone how effectively good intentions indicated on the questionnaires were translated into practice. The results of the on-site studies described in Chapters 5 and 6 help to alleviate these problems. General discussion of the findings is therefore deferred to Chapter 7.

5. RESULTS OF INTERVIEWS WITH SCHOOL STAFF

The on-site investigations described in Section 3.3 included interviews in selected secondary schools with the Principals, work experience co-ordinators and teaching staff. Documents related to work experience were also collected from the schools. Over 100 teachers were interviewed in 24 schools.

Two of the goals of the evaluation were served by the on-site investigations:

(a) Goal 1: To examine current practice associated with the organisation of work experience programs in such a way as to provide inferences about the likely outcomes, and to identify current practices which would guide the planning and development of programs.

(b) Goal 3: To determine the views of teachers on the importance and necessity of work experience in the school curriculum.

The results are set out below under two main headings:

1. Organisational details
2. Co-ordinators' and teachers' views on the importance and necessity of work experience as an educational activity.

5.1 ORGANISATIONAL DETAILS

5.1.1 The Work Experience Co-ordinators

In each of the schools, a staff member was designated as the work experience co-ordinator. In most of the schools the co-ordinator taught either English or Citizenship Education. Where the school's work experience program catered for students in specific subject areas, the co-ordinator was invariably appointed from the teaching staff of those particular subjects. In seven of the schools the co-ordinators held the position of Principal, Subject Master or Senior Mistress.

The decisions on whether to implement a particular work experience program, the year levels to which it would apply, and its duration were made by the Principal in consultation with the co-ordinator and staff likely to be affected. In a few of the schools the co-ordinators were delegated a large measure of control over the program and their views on organising the whole operation were invariably approved by the Principal. In some of the schools the co-ordinators were persons who, by virtue of their position, were held in high esteem, but in most of the schools the staff generally regarded the co-ordinator as just a fellow staff member doing his job.

In the schools where a large program was operating and where work experience had been well integrated with school or Board subjects, the co-ordinators enjoyed a certain amount of prestige in terms of extra spares and staff support. Indeed, the co-ordinators in most of these schools held senior positions, such as Subject Master or Senior Mistress.

Overall, with two exceptions, the co-ordinators seemed very satisfied in their role.

5.1.2 Placement of Students

Placement of students with a particular employer was usually accomplished in one of two ways depending on the location of the school. In small town areas the general practice was to place students in positions from the available number of employers willing to participate. In larger towns and in the metropolitan region the usual procedure was first to determine students' preferences for occupational field and then to make contact with employers to match the preferences. In some of the schools a list of available employers was displayed from which students would decide their preferences. The actual matching of a student's preference with an employer was then determined by the co-ordinator, in some instances after consultation with other staff members.

In the majority of the schools the usual practice was to place only one student with one employer. Some schools, depending on the type and size of the employer's business, sometimes placed two or more students with one employer. This practice appeared to work well in some cases, but in other cases it was found to interfere with the interaction of the students with other adults in the work place, reducing the potential of the experience for social development. Two of the schools specifically avoided placing more than one student in the same area with a given employer, but were willing to place a number of students with one employer provided they were assigned to separate areas of the work place.

All of the co-ordinators reported that wherever possible students were placed according to their first job preference. Students who were not placed in their first job preference – usually around 10% but ranging up to 50% – understood that the lack of available positions precluded the school from satisfying their particular first preference. The popularity of certain positions was often cited as a reason for students' preferences not being accommodated. A few of the co-ordinators indicated that students who could not be placed in their first job preference in the first round of work experience were usually accommodated in subsequent rounds.

The co-ordinators unanimously agreed that students' job preferences were, with a few exceptions, realistic given their capabilities and scholastic record. In a few of the schools a counselling program was reportedly an effective procedure for ensuring that students were aware of the types of work options available or best suited for them. Counselling was usually conducted on an individual or small group basis.

5.1.3 Contact with Employers by School Staff

In a few of the schools initial contact with a prospective employer was by personal visit but in most of the schools canvassing for new employers was carried out by telephone in the first instance, usually followed by a personal visit by the co-ordinator or a member of the staff. In most of the schools, the co-ordinator alone did the work of contacting employers to arrange placements. In a few schools with large numbers of students to be placed, the co-ordinator was assisted in contacting employers by one or two teachers. In two schools, a well briefed teacher's aide was employed specifically to contact employers. In one school the variety of programs offered was such that two co-ordinators were appointed. In yet another situation a central co-ordinator for the district was appointed. His position was to liaise with schools in the area – State as well as private – that were offering a program. As central co-ordinator his task was to contact employers concerning the placement at various intervals of all students from the schools concerned. The position of central co-ordinator was rotated each year among the co-ordinators of the various schools in the district.

The task itself was found to be very time consuming. Though the co-ordinators were not specifically asked if they had sufficient time to organise the work experience program, about one-third of the co-ordinators indicated that they needed more time free from teaching duties in order to carry out this work.

5.1.4 Interaction between Student and Employer

Contact between students and their work experience employers before commencement of the work experience was a common feature of the programs.

Such interviews had one or more of the following functions:

- the employer briefs the student on matters related to the student's obligations such as dress, working times, safety and so on;
- the employer assesses the suitability of the student for the work and vice versa; and
- the student experiences an interview simulating that of a candidate for employment.

The procedure in most of the schools was for the student to initiate contact with the employer. The majority of the schools encouraged the students to meet the employer in an interview situation: a few reported specifically requesting employers to interview students, while the majority reported asking the employers if they wished to interview the student. Fourteen of the twenty-four schools reported that students were interviewed either as a result of the school's request or the employer's.

5.1.5 On-site Visits during Work Experience

In the majority of the schools the co-ordinator and teachers of the students concerned visited the employers and students during the work experience. Some of the schools claimed it was not possible for the staff to visit every employer. In two of the schools conducting a large program, staff who were not teachers of the particular students nor in any other way connected with the program, were approached for assistance in visiting employers during the program. In both schools the response from the staff was very good. Three of the schools reported that no employers were visited during the students' work experience. In two of these schools employers were contacted by telephone either during the students' period in the work place or following the students' return to school.

There was no consistent method for setting up teacher-employer visits. In a majority of the schools teachers did not make an appointment to visit the employer nor, it was reported, had employers requested such action. A few of the co-ordinators indicated that they had tried to telephone employers but it was not always practical. Some of the teachers did contact employers prior to their visit but this was the exception rather than the rule. Some of the co-ordinators and the teachers gained the impression that employers did not expect to be contacted by the staff before the interview realising that teachers would be able to come only when free rather than at a time suitable to the employer.

In three of the schools teachers were briefed by the co-ordinator prior to the on-site visits. The purpose of the briefing was to indicate aspects of the work place to be observed and questions to be asked of employers and students. Teachers' visits would in this way form a major aspect of the school's evaluation of the work experience program. In most of the schools however, teachers were not provided with guidance on how to conduct the interview with employers and students.

5.1.6 Classroom Activities Pre-and Post-Work Experience

The extent and nature of pre- and post-work experience classroom activities varied from school to school and with the type of program offered. In schools where a transition program was offered students were usually exposed to a variety of activities in particular subject areas where it was thought such activities were best integrated. Typical activities and the subject areas in which these were incorporated were:

- letter writing, applying for jobs – English
- telephone answering techniques – English
- interview techniques, mock interviews – English, Citizenship Education
- grooming, manners, safety, hygiene, personality development – Home Economics, English, Manual Arts
- money changing skills, budgeting, consumer education – Mathematics, Citizenship Education
- career counselling – Citizenship Education
- career planning, video and slides display, dissemination of literature – English, Citizenship Education
- office procedure, filing and record keeping – Business Studies
- student report on work experience, verbal and written – English, Citizenship Education
- letter of thanks to employer – English and Business Studies.

The actual time spent on these activities varied considerably among the schools. In some of the schools one class period was devoted to work experience activities each day for the entire school year, but the usual practice reported was for activities to be included in regular classes during the weeks immediately prior to work experience. Again this practice varied from school to school in that a few schools spent more time on particular activities than other schools. In those schools where a transition program was not offered most of the co-ordinators indicated that teachers of work experience students usually set aside some class time in their subjects for various activities as a lead up to the actual work experience.

About half of the schools had devised a 'course work booklet' to prepare the students for work experience by informing them through written and graphic presentation on such matters as:

- grooming and manners;
- interview techniques;
- presentation at work – punctuality, speech;
- courtesy and co-operation;
- self-evaluation chart;
- work place terminology; and
- letter writing style.

Actual post-work experience activities usually consisted of discussion in class about the students' work experiences. In some of the schools, students were required to give verbal reports and written reports which formed part of the assessment in a particular subject, usually Citizenship Education or English. In one school a roneoed booklet was prepared from the written reports supplied by the students concerning their work experiences.

A few of the co-ordinators reported that little or no time was spent on classroom activities related to work experience. A few of the schools clearly were unsure of what kinds of activities could be integrated with school and Board subjects as part of the work experience program.

5.1.7 Other Aspects

Guidelines for printed materials to support work experience are contained in the *Manual for Work Experience in Queensland Schools*. Without exception the schools were adopting some or all of the guidelines contained in the *Manual*, though only a few schools were using all of the suggested forms and evaluation instruments. Many schools had devised their own sets of organisational guidelines and evaluation instruments. A large measure of the success of the work experience program in a few of the schools seemed to be due to their efforts in preparing printed guidelines for students.

In some of the schools a booklet of forms was prepared for each student. The booklet contained the following items:

- Explanatory note for parents about the program
- Student personal details
- Rules for safety – a code of behaviour
- Placement notification
- Letter of introduction for employer
- Student self-evaluation chart – punctuality, hygiene, speech, initiative, courtesy
- Employer questionnaire
- A character reference for the employer to complete
- A letter of thanks to the employer
- Report form for the student to complete after the work experience.

By contrast documentation in some of the schools was limited to:

- An explanatory letter to parents on the place of work experience in education. The letter was accompanied by the students' "Work Preference Form" which had to be signed by the parents/guardian.
- A letter or pamphlet for general distribution to employers.
- An "Arrangement for Agreement Form" setting out the conditions under which students were to be placed with participating employers.

Evaluation of the students' progress during work experience was usually done in one of two ways:

1. The school requested the employer to furnish a report on the student; or
2. Teachers or the co-ordinator visited employers to discuss the student's progress.

Some of the schools required students to complete a questionnaire while on work experience. Some of the questionnaires were quite probing and formed the basis for the evaluation of the program. Some schools requested students' parents to evaluate the work experience of their children, usually by means of a form sent home asking parents to comment about such things as their children's response, the school organisation, travel and clothing, and the actual experience.

All of the Principals reported that work experience was mentioned at P & C meetings. In a few of the schools, Principals indicated that they informed the P & C meetings of the details of the work experience program and from time to time the co-ordinator would attend to provide progress reports. Some of the schools organised special meetings at the school to discuss work experience, sometimes in the form of social functions attended by employers, parents and school staff.

5.2 CO-ORDINATORS' AND TEACHERS' VIEWS ON WORK EXPERIENCE

In order to gauge the nature and depth of staff commitment to work experience a number of questions were asked, the responses to which are discussed under the following headings:

- Benefits to the school and community
- Duration of work experience
- Level of staff support
- Employer participation and satisfaction
- Student participation and satisfaction
- Work experience as a legitimate educational activity.

5.2.1 Benefits to the School and Community

Most of the co-ordinators and teachers felt that employers and the school benefited from work experience, as well as students. Most felt that work experience improved school-community relations. About half of the co-ordinators and the teachers who were involved with work experience claimed that they also profited from the program because it gave them an opportunity to interact with the community on a working basis. This experience they claimed, allowed them to gain first hand impressions of the work place and hear comments from employers which were invaluable in the evaluation of students and of the work experience program generally. One of the teachers remarked "The community gets a chance to see the types of students who will eventually be looking for full-time jobs and such deficiencies as may show up usually reflect upon the school since students are seen as products of the school system. In this way educators are able to hear and hopefully act upon constructive criticism from the very people upon whom students must eventually turn to for employment". Another teacher said "The school is very much a part of the community and with a work experience program it gives the school an opportunity to foster ties with employers which is important in this town".

5.2.2 Duration of Work Experience

The general view was that students should spend at least one week with an employer but preferably two weeks. The majority of the co-ordinators and teachers who had visited employers indicated that most employers felt that one week was insufficient time for students to become familiar with a variety of work experiences. Most conceded that in certain occupations which offer little or no variety of work that a few days might be enough. Most of the respondents felt that longer and more frequent periods of work experience would be more beneficial for students planning to leave school in Years 10 or 11 than for students planning to complete Year 12.

Many of the co-ordinators and teachers responded that while it would be ideal for students to be sent out two or three times in the year, the logistics would be impracticable, unless student numbers were kept small. A few of the co-ordinators and teachers felt that employers may be hesitant to participate on more than one occasion in the year especially for blocks of two weeks at a time.

A few of the co-ordinators suggested that more periods of work experience might not be well received by some members of the staff because of the disruption it might cause to their teaching program. When questioned however, only a few of the teachers were hesitant to endorse work experience because of fears that it would disrupt the teaching of their subjects. Most of the teachers were not concerned unless some students in a given class remained in school while others were on work experience.

5.2.3 Staff Support

Generally the co-ordinators reported that teachers who were involved with the work experience program appeared to be keen to participate but suspected that interest among non-participating teachers would be mixed. These views were generally borne out in the responses that teachers gave. Some of the teachers who had not been involved with the program claimed that they would be happy and quite willing to assist, but most were unsure of what was entailed in conducting a work experience program, and were unsure of the effect that work experience would have on their teaching program.

On the whole the co-ordinators were satisfied with the support they were getting from staff, although a few indicated that they would be pleased if more staff were involved. There were four instances where the co-ordinators admitted that staff support was low: in two cases the co-ordinators felt there was no need to involve staff given the size of the program; in one case the co-ordinator was reluctant to approach the staff to seek support; in the other case the co-ordinator felt that it was the Principal's role to enlist the support of staff.

The existence of structures for communication among school administration, work experience co-ordinator and teaching staff seemed to be associated with the more successful programs and lacking in the less successful ones. In those schools which appeared to have particularly successful programs, committees involving staff and administration had been established to plan and organise the programs, and to meet regularly to anticipate and solve problems in ways that would meet with overall staff approval. In one school where the program seemed to be near to a state of collapse, the co-ordinator had not enlisted the support of other teachers and the Principal was not aware that the co-ordinator was dissatisfied with bearing the burden alone.

5.2.4 Employer Participation

Almost all of the co-ordinators indicated that with few exceptions employers were pleased to participate in the work experience program and were generally pleased with the students who had been placed with them. A few of the co-ordinators and teachers indicated that a few employers had expressed dissatisfaction with particular students.

In most of the schools the number of employers who declined to participate was fewer than five per cent, and a few co-ordinators reported that employer response was 100 per cent. Only in one school had the response been low and this appeared to be the result of a combination of poor publicity, lack of staff awareness and support, and general dissatisfaction on the part of the co-ordinator towards the position. Some co-ordinators and teachers did however express concern that employers in their area might become overburdened by frequent requests for work experience placements from schools in the area. There was no actual evidence given that employers had complained.

The co-ordinators cited a number of reasons for employers declining to participate. The most typical reasons were that the employer's business was too small to offer a meaningful work experience or the program was being conducted at an inconvenient time for the employer. In some cases, employers declined to participate because of the confidential nature of their business. Most employers were reported to be very eager to participate, many claiming that work experience should have been offered when they were at school.

Some co-ordinators reported that some employers were paying students in cash or gifts, a practice difficult to control.

Because the level of satisfaction among employers was quite high, most of the co-ordinators and the teachers indicated that the visit to employers was an activity of the program which they particularly enjoyed.

5.2.5 Student Participation

All of the co-ordinators and all of the teachers reported that, with few exceptions, students appeared to be very keen to take part in work experience. Most of the teachers indicated that there were only one or two students in a school who did not have a particularly good work experience. In some instances, this was apparently because the students felt that the duties were repetitive, or they were bored because of a lack of activity. Three of the co-ordinators reported incidents where a student appeared to be used by the employer as a form of free labour. In each instance, the student was left unsupervised and given instructions to carry out a specific task of a routine and often laborious nature. A few students had claimed that their experience was more observational than involving. Most of the co-ordinators and teachers felt that the small minority of students who did not enjoy their work experience felt it beneficial anyway because exposure to their particular work preference had caused them to consider alternative jobs or careers.

Some of the respondents were concerned that certain students might damage the school's reputation by their behaviour during work experience. In two of the schools, students who were considered to be potential troublemakers were actually excluded from participating in work experience. In other cases, students who had caused embarrassment to the school were excluded from further work experience. Where schools had sent potential problem students on work experience, a common result was that teachers were surprised at how well the students responded. Two strategies are suggested: careful supervision by the school of students' work experience where problems are anticipated, and open and frank dealings with employers.

Instances were reported of students not being able to afford costs of transport to the work place. In one case, costs were borne by the school. In another, the school staff or the employers concerned arranged transport for the students concerned.

Many of the co-ordinators reported instances of students who had not performed well in school but had been permanently placed in jobs as a result of work experience and appeared to have adjusted well to the work place.

5.2.6 Work Experience as a Legitimate Educational Activity

All of the co-ordinators and all the teachers agreed with the view that work experience was a legitimate part of education and not just another 'soft option'. Many of the co-ordinators and teachers added such remarks as "...Work experience is an essential part of education...', "...It is a very important part of education...", "It is a necessary part of education..."

On the question of whether work experience should become part of the regular curriculum, responses from all of the co-ordinators and teachers strongly supported the view that it should. Moreover, there was unanimous agreement that work experience would be beneficial to all students in Years 10 to 12. However, the majority of the respondents felt that academically bright students in Years 11 and 12 were less in need of work experience than those students considered at risk of unemployment or who intend to leave school before the end of Year 12. On the other hand, a minority of the

co-ordinators and teachers indicated that work experience should be compulsory for all students in Years 10 to 12 even at the expense of regular school and Board subjects which they claimed often had little relevance to the future lives of many students. Many of the teachers saw the main benefit of work experience to be its contribution to the social development of students regardless of their academic ability.

Opinions were mixed on the question of whether work experience should be recorded on the student's report card. The purpose of the question was to ascertain teachers' perceptions of the status of work experience in relation to the regular subjects which are shown on school report cards. While approximately 40 per cent of the co-ordinators and teachers felt that it would be a good idea to record work experience on the student's report card, approximately 30 per cent of the co-ordinators and 50 per cent of the teachers felt that it was unnecessary. Some had not thought about it and could not offer an opinion. A few co-ordinators and teachers were opposed to the idea because they felt that some students who did not have a good work experience would be disadvantaged as would students who had no opportunity to do work experience. As pointed out by many of the respondents, there may be practical reasons for not including items like work experience on the school report. For instance, it may present intractable assessment problems, or assessment may detract from the experience itself. Nonetheless, the teachers' and co-ordinators' responses on this issue indicated that most of them seemed ready to consider the idea, some enthusiastically, in spite of the complexity of the issue. Only a few rejected the idea out of hand.

Another indication of the status of work experience among school activities is provided by responses to two questions: whether the position of work experience co-ordinator attracted or ought to attract a certain amount of prestige or status, and whether the position of co-ordinator should be on the same level as Subject Master. The initial response from the majority of the co-ordinators was that neither did they seek status nor did they expect that their position ought to attract status or prestige. Some indicated that they needed more time to organise the program, but almost all of the co-ordinators indicated that they were amply rewarded for their efforts by the personal satisfaction it gave them to see the benefits that the students were getting from work experience. About 40 per cent of the co-ordinators felt that they did have a certain amount of status within the school and felt that the position warranted a status equivalent to that of Subject Master. Most of the teachers indicated they would not volunteer or apply for the position of co-ordinator, but would be willing to consider taking the job if requested.

Taken as a whole, the evidence indicates that most of the teachers accepted that work experience should move towards a more central place in the curriculum with a status approaching but below that of the academic subjects. The teachers' responses ranged from acceptance to enthusiasm for suggestions that work experience and related activities should become an integral part of the secondary education of all students, particularly those not planning post-secondary education on leaving school. Most of the interviewees did not seem unduly concerned that work experience might take time away from the regular subjects, except that some of them saw the Board of Secondary School Studies' requirements as barriers to the extension of work experience.

5.3 SUMMARY

To summarise the main findings of the interviews with the teachers and work experience co-ordinators:

- Co-ordination of work experience was an extra job taken on by a staff member who was delegated a large measure of control over the program.
- Efforts were made to place students in work experience in occupational fields specified by them and corresponding to their job aspirations.
- In most of the cases the work experience co-ordinators arranged all of the work placements. First contact was by telephone, and a personal visit followed. This was very time consuming.
- Most of the schools arranged or encouraged interviews between students and employers before the experience.

- A few of the schools did not arrange for school staff to visit the work place during work experience. In most of the schools, informal visits were made by teachers of the students concerned.

- Wide variation was found from school to school in classroom activities related to work experience. Typical activities covered job acquisition skills, personal and social development, career guidance, and work habits. The activities were usually given during regular classes in the usual subjects during the weeks leading up to the work experience. About half of the schools provided guidance in the form of a printed booklet. Follow-up was usually by means of verbal or written reports.

- Most of the co-ordinators and teachers felt that work experience provided benefits not only for students but also for the school and community.

- Most of the co-ordinators and teachers expressed a preference for a single two-week block of work experience in a year, often justifying the preference in terms of benefit to students and practical matters of organisation.

- Most of the co-ordinators were satisfied with the support given by school staff. The existence of structures for communication among school staff seemed to be associated with the more successful programs and lacking in the less successful ones.

- The response of employers to requests to participate was very high, and the schools reported that most employers were satisfied with their participation.

- Most students were keen to participate and responded well to the opportunities provided by work experience.

- Most of the teachers accepted that work experience should move towards a more central place in the curriculum with a status approaching but below that of the academic subjects.

5.4 DISCUSSION

The general nature of the findings in Chapter 4 is complemented by the detail provided above. Unfortunately there is no way of knowing how representative a sample was provided by the selected schools, so the added detail suffers from lesser generalisability. However, the survey and the on-site investigations can be taken together to provide general findings which are discussed in Chapter 7.

6. RESULTS OF INTERVIEWS WITH STUDENTS

The interviews with students were in pursuit of goal 2 of the evaluation as described in Section 2.3: to provide a categorisation of the types of experience which students encounter, on-the-job, during work experience, based on the kinds of benefits which students might be expected to gain from them.

Quite apart from the different occupational areas involved, a wide range of types of experience was revealed in the interviews. Some of the students experienced very realistic working situations. Others experienced more or less artificial simulations of working. Some of the students were kept busy, while others experienced long periods of inactivity, or observation without direct involvement. Some learned about working life, or acquired particular job skills and work habits. Others acquired more general understanding of the operation of various sectors of the community. Some of the work experience placements contributed towards students' personal and social development through the taking of responsibility or interaction with adults on a working basis. In some of the placements, the students were treated as adult employees, while in others, the students remained very much in the student's role. Clearly, there was considerable variety in the types of work experience different students had, and also in what students could have been expected to learn from the different experiences.

The placements as described by the students, were placed into nine categories. Each type of placement represents a composite picture of the actual experiences reported by a number of the students who were interviewed. Each type takes in a range of experiences which appeared to place students in similar roles and to have similar potential learning outcomes. The categories are described briefly below, and then each is discussed at length with the aid of examples derived from the students' responses in the interviews.

Irrespective of the type of placement, most of the students reported enjoying their work experience. Almost all of them took it seriously and very few reported having problems adjusting to the work situation. They liked being treated as adults.

Briefly, the different types of placement are:

1. *Regular work placement:* Students carry out the functions of normal employees. They may be assigned to different jobs at different times, but what they do on a given job is no different from what other employees in that place of work do. Apart from not being paid, they become regular workers.

2. *Supernumerary placement:* There is not sufficient work to keep the student occupied in a realistic way. The student may spend much of the time with nothing to do, or doing minor tasks such as running errands or 'tidying up'.

3. *Apprenticeship placement:* The student takes on the role of beginning apprentice, learning and performing some of the basic tasks and chores associated with a skilled job.

4. *Learner/assistant placement:* The student acts as an aide to a skilled person and gains an understanding of the kinds of work the person does.

5. *Guided tour placement:* The student is conducted around a business or field of employment to observe the various activities in that line of work.

6. *Orientation placement:* The student is shown around in an area of employment and given opportunities to try some of the various types of work. The primary purpose of the hands-on experience is to give the student a feel for the kinds of activities which workers there engage in, and any service or product provided by the student is quite incidental.

7. *Onlooker placement:* The student is assigned to an employee or place of work to observe people at work. There is very little, if any, direct involvement by the student in the work.

8. *Simulated work placement:* The student is given jobs which simulate the work in an area. The student learns from the activity but makes no actual contribution in terms of service or production.

9. *School-based work experience:* The student works on jobs specifically created by the school to provide work experience to students.

Each of the nine types of work experience placement is described in turn below. Each description is followed by a number of examples selected from the interviews, and a brief discussion.

6.1 REGULAR WORK PLACEMENT

In this type of placement, the student is given work which is no different from what would be given to a beginning employee in that place of work. The student is treated as a fellow worker by the regular employees and is expected by the employer to make a contribution in terms of service or production.

This was the most common type of placement described in the interviews, and takes in a wide variety of jobs. Four examples are given to illustrate the range.

Example A. Maurice worked in a small factory producing fishing rods. He dipped rods in varnish, glued ends on high jump poles, cleaned screws, assembled fishing rods and spray painted them. He did the same type of work each day and was kept busy throughout his one-week experience. He found the work easy to learn but would have preferred working at a higher skill level. He thought parts of the work to be unpleasant, such as working with sticky chemical glues. He found his supervisors and fellow workers to be friendly and helpful, and he felt himself to be a useful but not essential member of the team. Maurice learned what it was like to put in a day's work and "what parents must feel like when they come home".

Example B. Leanne worked in an office. She wrote receipts, typed, operated the switchboard, recorded stock purchases, collected the mail, ran errands for the manager, and did the banking. She worked with two other office girls answering to a manager. The other workers treated her "as one of them". Leanne also interacted with clients and workers from other sections of the business. She even dealt with customers who telephoned in with complaints. Leanne liked the work, but felt less was expected from her than if she had been a permanent employee. She enjoyed operating the switchboard, but found too much typing a bore. She felt the main benefits to her were in the area of social development ("learning how to co-operate with workmates and mix with people").

Example C. Veronica worked in a large variety store. She marked prices, helped with invoices and packed goods for customers. She was never without a job to do, but had plenty of opportunity to interact with the other workers and the customers. She enjoyed the social interaction, but did not like the close supervision. She felt that she was as valuable to the employer as the regular employees in terms of work done. Veronica found the long hours tiring and complained of sore feet from standing all day. Parts of the job such as packing customers' goods were very boring for her. Veronica felt that she gained little benefit from the experience in terms of personal or social development or career selection. On the other hand, she learned something of the way supermarkets operate.

Example D. Susan worked in a child-minding centre. She shared various tasks with the four other employees, such as changing nappies, bathing babies, playing with children and supervising them. She was allowed to work in different sections of the centre on different days. She liked the children and learned a great deal about child care. Her fellow workers made her feel welcome and treated her "like an equal". Most of the time she was kept very busy, except when the children were asleep. Susan enjoyed the work and decided to aim for employment as a child-care assistant.

Students in this type of placement learn what it is like to be working. They have to adapt to the demands, routine and responsibility of working, and develop good work habits and attitudes. They may increase their chances for employment through being able to claim experience and supply employment references to potential employers. Working with adults provides potential for social development. Employers also stand to gain economic benefit from this type of placement, which can go some way towards compensating them for their contribution.

6.2 SUPERNUMERARY PLACEMENT

In this type of placement, the student spends little of the time engaged in any useful or interesting activity. There may be long periods standing or sitting and waiting, or else "make-work" tasks may be assigned such as errands, general "tidying up" and making the tea. In effect, there is not enough work for the supernumerary and work has to be found or created.

Among the students interviewed, this type of placement was an exception rather than the rule. Two examples are given.

Example A. Steven worked for a car wrecker. When required, he would remove parts from cards in the yard, restock shelves, or clean up. He occupied about two hours a day on these tasks and spent the rest of the time "sitting around talking". Steven did not enjoy the lack of activity although he had looked forward to the work experience.

Example B. Elizabeth worked as a shop assistant in a newsagency. She unpacked books, checked, priced and shelved them, and served customers. Most of the time she had nothing to do since there were few customers, and two permanent employees. Elizabeth got on well with the other assistants and enjoyed talking to customers, but did not like her boss who yelled at her too much. Although she took the work experience seriously, she was bored much of the time and found it tiring to be on her feet all day. She felt that the experience had helped her overcome her shyness by serving customers and meeting other workers in the shopping centre.

While some students might benefit from the lack of pressure associated with this type of placement, others may find it excessively boring. It may provide a realistic impression of some types of work, and may help certain students to develop reliability, but generally the supernumerary placement seems to have far less educational value than most of the other types of placement.

6.3 APPRENTICESHIP PLACEMENT

In this type of placement, the student takes on the role of apprentice to a skilled worker. This involves carrying out some of the basic tasks and chores which would normally be part of the skilled worker's job, under the direction and supervision of the skilled worker. This type of placement may include work in occupations such as nursing or teaching which are not normally entered through apprenticeship.

Example A. Neil worked with motor mechanics servicing cars. There were three apprentices and four tradesmen under a foreman mechanic in the shop, and Neil was treated like one of the apprentices. He assisted in various servicing jobs, including stripping motors, clutches and steering. He also cleaned up after oil changes. He learned many of the basic skills of motor mechanics, as well as the education needed to become a qualified mechanic. He enjoyed the work but found the hours very tiring. Neil spent about one-quarter of the time observing others at work rather than working himself, but always had something to do. He liked his workmates and enjoyed their company. The work experience helped him to decide to choose this work as a career.

Example B. Annette worked with a chef at a tavern. She helped to prepare food and learned presentation of tables. She was kept busy most of the time actually working under supervision. She liked the people she worked with: the chef, a cook and a kitchen hand. These people treated her as if she was a full-time worker there. Annette felt she had learned new skills on the job and had contributed valuable service to the employer.

The apprenticeship placement allows students to try out apprenticeship itself as well as the particular type of occupation. Usually there would be opportunity for social interaction with adults such as other apprentices as well as supervisors. The placement provides a balance between worker and student roles, with opportunities for direct learning of job skills. In many cases, employers can derive economic benefit to compensate them for their contribution. Also, this type of placement can provide employers with a good method of screening potential apprentices. Care may be needed to ensure that some placements which might seem to be in the apprenticeship category do not turn out to be supernumerary or onlooker types, because of too few opportunities for involvement in skilled work or because of too much observation or menial work.

6.4 LEARNER/ASSISTANT PLACEMENT

In this type of placement, the student is given a taste of certain skilled types of work by acting as an aide to a skilled person. The student actively takes part in the work, but always under direction, and always as an offsider.

Example A. Tanya acted as a teacher's aide in the primary department of a State school. She helped with typing of stencils and took groups of children for reading and games. She also assisted with remedial classes. Tanya spent less than 15 minutes per day observing rather than assisting or working. Tanya enjoyed the experience and felt she had contributed valuable service. She worked with other teacher aides who made her feel welcome and treated her as a fellow worker.

Example B. Paul worked as an assistant to a veterinary surgeon. He assisted in surgery with cleaning and shaving, and helped with the control and feeding of animals. He observed without involvement for less than one-quarter of the time, and felt that he had contributed work of value to his employer. He enjoyed the work and was surprised at the amount of involvement he was allowed.

The learner/assistant placement allows students to have realistic experience in occupations in which adoption of the occupational role is not possible because of the skill level required. The experience would be valuable both for learning about working and for learning about the community. It would also provide good employment orientation for students planning to enter skilled occupations. It may, however, involve significant contribution by the employer, and may require a certain level of ability on the student's part.

6.5 GUIDED TOUR PLACEMENT

The student in this type of placement is given a kind of "guided tour" and shown various types of work in the area of employment concerned. There is very little, if any, experiential component: the student observes and asks questions.

Example A. Brendon was given a one-week long tour of the police force. He visited a magistrates' court, the Police Academy, the legal aid, forensic, and probation and parole sections. There were no opportunities for direct involvement because of the nature of the work. On the other hand, Brendon felt he was kept "busy" and he enjoyed the week. His plans to enter the force were confirmed by the experience. He was treated with respect as a visitor and genuine attempts were made to answer his questions.

Example B. Evan visited a tropical research laboratory for three days and was shown various sections of the facility. He observed for the whole time and was given explanations of what was being done. There was ample opportunity to talk to the scientists. Evan felt welcome and was treated "as if he worked there". His ambitions for the type of work were confirmed by the experience.

The guided tour placement provides the student with no direct experience of working, and the student remains very much in the role of student, not worker. As a result, the guided tour placement cannot be expected to provide much in the way of personal development through taking responsibility or experiencing adult status. On the other hand, this type of placement may provide some students with assistance in career decision making. Alternatively, it may be suitable as a kind of extended field trip in courses with goals related to learning about the community or social system. Such experiences are obviously provided at some cost to the employer concerned, but provide little of benefit in return, except where they may form part of recruitment or community relations programs.

6.6 ORIENTATION PLACEMENT

This type of placement is like a guided tour with opportunities for "hands-on" experience. The student is conducted to various sections of a work place or field of work. The operation of each section is described to the student and opportunities provided for asking questions. Where possible, students are allowed to become involved in the work in order to "get the feel" of the various jobs. Any production or service provided by the student is incidental to the lessons learned from trying out the various jobs.

Example A. Julie was shown around the various operations of a theatre company. She observed tradesmen working on set construction, and was allowed to assist with the final touches. She visited a workshop to observe the preparation of costumes and props. She was allowed to help with the sewing. At another site, she helped in the selection and cleaning of props. At a city theatre, she watched rehearsals and assisted the stage hands. All in all, Julie spent about half the time working, the other half on activities. Generally, she was not actually assigned work, but had to find things to do herself, but she felt that her contribution was of value. She learned a lot about entry into the theatrical professions and the problems associated with this type of work.

Example B. Sharon was shown around various departments of a large printing and publishing firm. She helped with some of the typing and clerical work, tried writing brochures and designing drawings, and helped with some cutting and pasting. She was surprised to find how large the operation was and just how much was involved in publishing. She felt that the goals of her experience as seen by the employer were to "see how the place was run" and to enjoy herself. Sharon learned some of the problems of the industry and claimed to have gained in personal growth through seeing different points of view.

This type of placement adds the benefits of some direct involvement to the advantages of the guided tour, but the student stays very much in the student's role. The main outcome of orientation is learning about the business concerned. Both students in the examples were surprised at the range of activities involved in the respective fields. On the other hand, opportunities are limited for personal growth through taking responsibility, or for development of work habits or job skills. The opportunities for students to try their hands at jobs would probably make orientation more interesting for students than the guided tour, and could also be expected to provide a better avenue for testing career choices.

6.7 ONLOOKER PLACEMENT

In this type of placement, the student is assigned to one or more employees and spends much of the time observing them at work. The student "stands and watches" or "follows around" the employees, and may occasionally help with routine chores.

Example A. Maylene spent her work experience with a group of physiotherapists in a rehabilitation centre. She was allowed to try out some of the equipment, but did not have any involvement in the work. A couple of hours of each day were spent talking with staff members in their lounge, and most of the rest of the time observing therapy or talking to patients. The physiotherapists at the centre "went out of their way" to explain things to Maylene. She learned a lot about physiotherapy including entry requirements, daily duties and relationships with physicans. She felt that speaking with adults has made her more self-confident. Maylene found physiotherapy far less glamorous or interesting than she had expected and the experience decided her against physiotherapy as a career.

Example B. Bevan spent his work experience observing air traffic controllers at work. Part of the time he observed in the control tower, part in flight service. He discussed their work with the controllers but took little part in any activity. Bevan enjoyed being in the environment of the airport and felt welcome there. He found that the work was less demanding than he had expected. Bevan's decision to enter this type of work was confirmed by the experience.

Example C. Tim spent his work experience week with truck drivers. He helped in some of the routine maintenance of the trucks, but spent most of the time as a passenger in trucks carting gravel. Each day he was assigned to a different driver. Most of the time there was nothing for him to do. Tim felt that the work experience had given him "an idea of what work would be like" and had helped him to decide on truck driving as a career.

The onlooker placement may allow some social development because of the close attachment of the student to the assigned workers. It could provide increased familiarity with jobs requiring levels of skill far beyond students, or in which legal restraints, intimacy, safety consideration or confidentiality restrict direct involvement of the student. The lack of involvement may result in boredom for the student after a few days and since students cannot take on responsibility, personal development goals such as work habits and attitudes are not likely to be met. The student remains very much in the student's role. This type of placement provides little direct benefit to the employer, and the student could be somewhat of a nuisance to the employees concerned in some cases. Where learning about the particular type of job is the main goal, this type of experience may be satisfactory if it does not extend over more than a few days.

6.8 SIMULATED WORK PLACEMENT

In this type of placement, the student performs work which is of no use or value to the employer. The work assigned is a simulation of some of the jobs normally done in that area.

Example A. Graham spent a week with engineers and draftsmen. He wanted to see what it would be like to be a draftsman. It was not considered possible for him to become directly involved in the work, so he was given drawings to trace. He was allowed to keep his traced drawings. Graham enjoyed the week and although he had taken no responsibility or performed any service for the employer, he felt that he had been given a fairly realistic simulation of that type of work.

Example B. Jeanette was placed in the computer section of a large firm. She wanted to experience work as a programmer. She was given a variety of experience in tasks related to computing, but few of them were of benefit to the employer. She was given opportunities to translate programs from one language to another and to try writing some programs of her own. About one-quarter of the time, she had nothing to do at all. Jeanette did learn a lot about computing and about various jobs associated with it.

Example C. John spent a week with a radio station. He had indicated "radio announcer" as his preferred occupational field for work experience. Although John spent more than half of the time observing, he was given various tasks to simulate the work of a radio announcer. He announced music, took part in conversations on air, and with a fellow student planned and presented a short program.

The simulated work placement may provide students with a taste of what it is like to work in a particular type of occupation or work area in which direct participation is not possible because of the skill level required, or where safety or confidentiality may be factors. The student is able to try out the occupational role in a fairly realistic way. There is, however, limited opportunity for personal development through taking responsibility or making a contribution. The employer receives no direct benefit from the simulation and may find it costly in terms of diversion of employees' time. Consequently, it would probably have to be reserved for selected students with a clear interest in the field. Like the orientation type placement, it does provide the student with experience, but retains the student in the student role.

6.9 SCHOOL-BASED WORK EXPERIENCE

This type of placement is specifically created by the school. The employee role is simulated as far as possible for the student, but the school retains direct control of the student's experience.

Example A. Janelle performed office work at her school. Most of her time was spent on typing, but she also answered the telephone, handled petty cash and did the banking. She worked regular office hours and the school teaching staff treated her as an employee, not as a student. Janelle found that the experience helped her to know what it is like being at work. She reported gains in maturity and self-confidence.

Example B. Peter worked on computing in his school for the work experience week. He sorted programs, adjusted them and wrote new ones. As far as possible, normal work conditions were simulated. Responsibility was assigned and a contribution expected. Two other students shared the tasks and a teacher supervised.

School-based simulation permits work experience for students for whom school supervision remains desirable or necessary. It also allows schools to retain direct control of the type of experience provided and to evaluate closely individual students' progress. In areas where employment opportunities are limited, school-based simulation can increase the number and range of work experience opportunities. Personal development such as responsibility may be fostered to the extent that employment conditions are realistically simulated, but there may be little opportunity for social development through interaction with adults outside the school environment. This type of placement does not necessarily draw upon the resources of the community nor provide opportunities for school/community interaction. An essential difference between work and school is that in school the student's welfare is the main consideration whereas at work the employee's welfare is secondary to the goals of the enterprise. It would be difficult for the school to simulate work in this aspect. School-based simulation may be very suitable for personal development of particular students, or evaluation of their readiness for placement outside the school for work experience. It may be an essential component of transition-to-work programs for certain students.

6.10 DISCUSSION

The above categorisation demonstrates how different types of work experience placements allow different types of educational outcomes. Consequently some types of placement may be appropriate and other types inappropriate for particular work experience programs or for particular students.

Schools are recommended to monitor work placements carefully by means of visits to the work place before and during the work experience, and by de-briefing students after the experience. In some cases, schools may be able to specify or request particular categories of work placement from employers.

A suitable match between placement and program or student can be made if three conditions are met:

(a) the various types of placement are understood;
(b) the placements available can be identified with respect to the types; and
(c) the goals of the program or student are clear.

7. CONCLUSIONS

The three previous chapters consist of the results of the various parts of the evaluation considered separately. In this chapter, evidence from each of the three chapters is brought together in discussion of a set of general findings, beginning with a description of the predominant patterns of work experience offerings in 1981 for Queensland State secondary students. The need to clarify the goals of work experience is then discussed. Selected problems associated with offering work experience are considered, and suggestions made for schools wishing to maximise the benefits of their work experience programs. A discussion follows containing some speculations about the success of work experience. The Report concludes with the major recommendation that schools should be encouraged to seek the widest possible involvement of teaching staff in the work experience exercise.

7.1 PREDOMINANT PATTERNS

The results lead to the following composite pictures of the predominant types of work experience for Queensland State secondary students in 1981.

Three types of programs were offered:

A. General programs in which work experience was offered to all or most students in a year level, usually Year 10. There were 110 programs of this type involving 10 637 students.

B. Programs associated with special transition-to-work courses for selected students, usually in Year 11. There were 82 programs of this type involving 2210 students.

C. Programs associated with the teaching of a particular subject, usually vocational subjects in Year 11 or 12. There were 25 programs of this type involving 935 students.

The programs were supported either by special courses designed in the school, or by special units in regular subjects such as English, Citizenship, Social Studies, business subjects, or Manual Arts. These courses or units commonly provided information on jobs, development of social skills, and training in applying and interviewing for jobs. Work experience placements were allocated mainly on the basis of students' stated preferences for occupational fields. Efforts were made to accommodate students' preferences, which were usually found to be realistic in terms of the students' abilities. Parents were informed of the program and required to approve their children's work placements. One period of one or two weeks of work experience was provided. Employers were informed of the goals of the program, briefed on the legal aspects, and asked generally to treat students as regular employees. Otherwise, employers were left to arrange, supervise, and evaluate the actual experience. Students and employers were encouraged to arrange interviews prior to the work experience. Most of the time-consuming work of contacting employers and arranging placements was shouldered by the work experience co-ordinator. Some teachers were requested to assist in visits to students and employers during the work experience. These visits were fairly informal. Employers welcomed the teachers who usually found the visits enjoyable. Employers were asked for verbal or written reports on students' work habits and social development during the work experience. On their return to school, students were required to give verbal or written reports on their work experience in one of their classes.

Such programs seem to be directed at providing students with a brief "taste" of adult working life in the world outside of school, with three main objectives:

- social development;
- general orientation to working life; and
- job acquisition skills.

A caution needs to be added here. The above composite description does not do justice to some of the carefully thought out and skilfully organised programs in the State, nor to some of the programs providing little more than a couple of days of observation in large places of employment in isolation from the rest of the school's program. Just the same, the gist of the descriptions probably applies to most of the programs offered in the State in 1981 as indicated in the survey responses.

7.2 CLARIFYING THE GOALS OF WORK EXPERIENCE

The evaluation aimed to describe the current situation in Queensland State schools with respect to work experience, without making judgments in terms of a set of preferred goals. This approach was consonant with the flexibility allowed by the legislation and Education Department guidelines. It was also appropriate to the wide range of concepts of the purposes of work experience encountered in the literature and in the field.

In some cases, work experience was seen as part of a process of *weaning* the student away from the dependence of supportive adults in the protective school environment towards independent functioning in the adult world. This notion was often found in special education. In secondary schools, work experience was sometimes seen as part of a *rescue mission* to save students who had not coped well at school and who were "at risk" of unemployment. Some critics have expressed fears that it may be a *palliative* for problems in the secondary school which leaves unchanged the source of the problem: fundamental inappropriateness of the curriculum. Others saw work experience as a kind of *Trojan Horse* brought into the academic curriculum with the potential to end up taking it over, or at least as a *catalyst* to accelerate desired changed in the curriculum.

Some have envisaged work experience as a device to help *bridge* the gap between school and the adult world. Another concept was the more profound function of a kind of *initiation* into the adult world, made necessary by youth beginning their first job later in life than in previous years. This would explain why students and the community take it so seriously. In some of the schools, work experience seemed to be a kind of extended *field trip* in which students learn about the community or about working. In other schools it was more like a *test drive* for helping to decide among career or job choices. Like the car buyer, the student uses the test drive to see if a choice "feels right" before deciding, even though decisions to that point may have been based on more objective considerations.

Some saw work experience as part of a process of *disillusionment* or bringing students down to earth, through being confronted with the realities of adult working life. In this way, students could be induced to accept the need to set goals and gain a sense of purpose in their school work. Others saw its main value as a kind of *certification* that the student had worked well in an employment situation. The certification would help the student obtain a job by reducing the risk for a potential employer. In some schools the *ambassadorial* function of students on work experience was stressed. This was often accompanied by reluctance to send out certain students. Many teachers and students saw it as a *dry run* for the first job, in which mistakes could be made without serious consequences.

The evaluation indicated a general diffuseness of purpose with respect to work experience in schools. This apparent diffuseness of purpose may not be cause for concern. Single-minded clarity of purpose was probably neither possible nor necessary in the early stage of the development of work experience programs. Time is needed for experience to produce practical understanding of the benefits of work experience and ways to maximise them.

Nonetheless, by now many schools should be in a position to profit from an effort to clarify the goals of their programs.

The inventory of outcomes in Section 2.1 would be of particular use in guiding such a clarification of goals. The exercise should be one of selection through assessing the relative priorities among worthwhile benefits, rather than one of broadening the goal statement to be inclusive of all possible benefits. The reason for this is to avoid ending up with a diffuse statement which gives no help in choosing among alternative practical aspects of organisation. Nonetheless, completely sacrificing certain goals may not be necessary, but clear allocations of priority are essential. Potential benefits for schools, teachers, employers and parents should be considered as well as those for students.

The goal clarification exercise could be carried out by working through the inventory of possible outcomes and allocating high, medium, or low priority to each of the benefits in the inventory. An alternative would be to classify each outcome in terms such as essential, important, desirable, or unnecessary. Outcomes with the same priority ratings could be examined to find a consistent line which might lead to the statement of a subsuming goal (such as strengthening links between the school and the community, for example). Separate goal clarifications for different groups of students would be necessary.

Clarification of goals should form part of a regular planning and review exercise. A suggested format for such an exercise is provided in Appendix 2.

7.3 PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH ORGANISING WORK EXPERIENCE

The planning or review of work experience needs to pay particular attention to three key aspects of its organisation:

1. Providing support for individual students
2. Arranging and monitoring work placements
3. Visiting students and employers during work experience.

7.3.1 Providing Support for Individual Students

The data from the various aspects of the evaluation indicate that most employers provided work experiences which most students found beneficial and enjoyable, and that most students experienced little difficulty adapting to the work situation. Nonetheless, there were indications of problems in individual cases: some placements appeared to have little educational value, some students had difficulties fitting in to the work place, and some schools were reluctant to allow certain students to participate in work experience.

Some schools took steps to provide individual counselling and support of various kinds to students before and during their work placement. As one strategy, in programs involving large numbers of students, teachers were assigned to smaller groups of students to provide the necessary guidance and support, as well as to arrange suitable placements. Another strategy was to hold meetings at the school during the work experience where students could discuss problems, share experiences, and seek help. In one school, Year 10 students on their first work experience were paired with senior students who were in work places nearby, so that the students could arrange to meet during lunch hours.

For some students, individual attention may have to be given in deciding on the appropriate type of work placement. The level of responsibility required, the amount and type of social interaction involved, physical strength required, the amount of supervision provided, or skill levels assumed are some of the aspects which may have to be considered in allocating a placement to a student.

The reluctance of schools to offer work experience at all to certain students is also a problem of individual attention. As discussed in Chapter 5, some schools were concerned that relations with employers and the school's reputation could be jeopardised by students' misbehaviour during work experience. Some students were actually excluded from work experience either in anticipation or as a result of inappropriate behaviour. Where schools had allowed such students to take part, a common result was pleasant surprise at how well some of them had responded to the work situation. The special schools study by Skidmore (1982) indicated that frank and open dealings with employers were necessary where behaviour problems might be anticipated. Secondary schools may need to consider including discussion of individual students' needs during briefings of employers prior to the work experience in certain cases.

The indications of the evaluation are that most secondary students may readily adapt to and benefit from the work situation with some straightforward guidance offered in the group setting, but that some students may require individual attention and support. There may be a danger in large scale programs that needs of individuals may not receive due attention.

Two extremes of organising programs showed up in the evaluation.

1. A kind of mass processing in which large numbers of students were placed and supervised by one or two teachers.
2. A very individualised program in which one teacher tailored programs for a small number of students.

There are advantages and disadvantages to each extreme, providing a dilemma for schools.

The mass processing approach allows the benefits of work experience to be extended to large numbers of students without diverting the attention of school staff from other important duties, but carries the risk of leaving significant needs of some students unsatisfied.

The individualised approach can provide for students' special needs, but might unnecessarily stretch the school's and community's resources if applied to large numbers of students.

If the work experience is reserved for a selected few students, then the majority are denied a valuable learning activity, the problems associated with selection arise, and there is the possibility that social division may be fostered, or work experience may become labelled as something for inferior students. A separate study of Special Schools (Skidmore, 1982) indicated that concentrated help for special students is both essential and effective. Many secondary students no doubt have needs very similar to those of special students and could be expected to benefit greatly from individualised attention, but only minimally from a large scale program.

Factors depending on locality also come into consideration:

- the proportion of students in the school who may need an individualised program;
- the availability of suitable work placements in the locality; and
- the commitment of the school administration, willingness of the school staff to participate, and the organising ability and experience of the work experience co-ordinator.

The dilemma has to be resolved as a first step in planning or reviewing a program. The compromise adopted by some schools is to offer a large scale program as well as one or more small, concentrated programs for selected students. The other possibility is to supplement the large scale program with special attention and extra work experience for selected students within it.

7.3.2 Arranging and Monitoring Work Experience Placements

The central problem for work experience programs is obtaining an appropriate work placement for each student. This implies making selections which in turn implies access to a pool of potential placements from which to select. It also implies negotiating with employers to have appropriate experiences provided in given placements.

There is obviously a limit on the size of the pool of potential placements in a given locality. The maximum possible number of placements in a work place at any given time is set by State legislation at the number of full-time employees. If all employers in an area participated up to three times a year, then the theoretical limit to the number of placements per year would be three times the number of full-time employees. Of course many of the placements would be unavailable or unsuitable. Taking the State as a whole, in 1980 there were about 700 000 full-time workers. If *one* suitable placement could be obtained twice a year for each *ten* employees, then 140 000 placements would have been available in 1980. There were about 70 000 students in Years 10, 11 and 12 in State and private schools in 1980. In other words, on this estimate, there were two suitable placements in 1980 for every student in Years 10, 11 and 12 in both State and private schools.

While this analysis does suggest that sufficient suitable placements exist, it does not mean that they are evenly distributed from place to place, or that they are easy to find. A particular problem seems to arise where a number of large high schools are close together in an urban area. The larger employers in the area may be faced with requests from four or five schools. Central Brisbane employers may receive requests from all of the suburbs. Area co-ordination is an obvious answer, and is being attempted. Small country areas also have particular problems, and some have arranged exchange schemes with city schools. Some schools were locating placements by enlisting support of parents, or holding "bring-a-job days" when students bring the names of employers of relatives or friends for the school to follow up.

During the evaluation, the investigators formed the impression that there may have been a tendency for some schools to underestimate the number of jobs in their area. The survey and interviews indicated that fewer than 10 per cent of employers refused first requests, and often for valid reasons not related to being over-used by schools. Employer support seems strong.

The main problem with arranging placements seems to be the large amounts of time involved in telephoning employers, taking return calls, visiting and briefing employers, and allocating the placements to students. In some schools the switchboard was not adequate to the volume of calls involved. Return calls often came at times inconvenient to the work experience co-ordinator who had other duties including teaching. Personal visits to inspect the work place and to brief employers on the school's requirements were also time-consuming, to the extent that some schools may have by-passed this important step. Also, in some cases, allocating placements to students became simply a matter of matching the types of jobs available to students' stated preferences for job types, with minimal attention to individual students' needs, or the quality of each placement. The problems were particularly acute where large number of students were involved and the entire burden of co-ordination was borne by one or two staff with a few extra periods released from teaching. The problems were less acute where small numbers of students were involved, or where the tasks were shared widely among the teaching staff, with help from non-professional staff or volunteer parents.

Allocating placements on the basis of students' stated preferences for occupational fields does have its advantages. It is administratively convenient, especially when large numbers of students are involved. It acts as an inducement for students to evaluate their abilities and career preferences, and to investigate and consider occupational fields. Nonetheless, occupational field may not be the best way to categorise placements, because some fields may not be able to provide suitable types of experience. For example, if a work experience program is planned to develop work habits and responsibility, actual on-the-job experience would be necessary; but if the student has specified police work as the chosen occupational field, an experience involving direct participation may not be possible. Another problem with occupational fields is that different placements in the same field may not provide the same type of work experience. For example, in one work experience placement in the field of nursing, the student observed a variety of types of nursing but did not take any active part, while in another placement in the same field, the student actually carried out all the duties of a nurse's aide in one particular ward.

The categorisation of work experience placements given in Chapter 6 provides an alternative basis for selecting and allocating placements based on potential educational value. While a student is actually on work experience, the school usually has little, if any, direct control over the type of experience provided by the employer. Nonetheless, the school does have two avenues for indirect control of a student's experience:

(1) briefing of the employer as to the student's needs or the program goals prior to the work experience; and

(2) selection among available placements and appropriate assignment of placements to individual students.

Both of these avenues require a well-thought-out set of goals of the work experience for the students involved and an understanding of the types of placement which can achieve these goals.

The avenue of proper briefing of employers then becomes a matter of clear communication and careful diplomacy. Some employers, however, may expect a dialogue about suitable experiences, or may be unable or unwilling to make special provision according to the school's specifications.

The avenue of proper selection and assignment of placements by the school requires knowledge of the type of experience a given employer provides regardless of briefing. Such knowledge can be gained in three ways:

(1) in the course of briefing sessions with the employer prior to any work experience;

(2) by means of on-site visits to the employer's work place before and during the work experience; and

(3) in the de-briefing of students on their return to school after work experience by means of interviews, verbal reports or written reports.

Through such monitoring of students' work experiences, schools can build up files on the placements available from employers. In some programs, the goals may require that only placements in certain categories would be used. In other programs, the placements available may be sorted into the nine placement categories to facilitate the process of allocating them according to the different needs of different students. For such programs, filing employer information under placement type may be preferable to filing it under employer's name, or industry, or occupational field.

7.3.3 On-site Visits during Work Experience

For many schools, the visits by school staff to students and employers at the work place during work experience was an important aspect of the work experience program, but the interviews with co-ordinators indicated that some secondary schools were not placing a high priority on visits, while others were not carrying them out routinely at all.

There are strong reasons for stressing this aspect of the work experience program. The evaluation indicated that the visits can provide for a number of important functions:

1. *Safeguarding students' well-being:* The welfare of individual students must be ultimately the responsibility of the school in any school activity.

2. *Fostering good school-community relationships:* The visits provided opportunities for the school to cultivate its relations with the co-operating employers.

3. *Evaluating students' progress:* Schools could obtain valuable information on students' performance in the work situation. Teachers gained new understanding of the abilities, characters and aspirations of their students by observing them in an adult setting and interacting with them in a supportive role.

4. *Monitoring work experience placements:* In order to allocate work placements on the basis of clear goals for the program or student, schools need information on the type of placement provided by each employer.

5. *Providing support for students:* Many students needed encouragement, reassurance, recognition or other forms of support during the experience. Most students apparently looked forward to teachers' visits, according to the interviews with the co-ordinators.

6. *Improving teachers' knowledge of the community and students:* Through interacting with employers in a working relationship and observing the work place at first hand, teachers were able to gain deeper insight into the community.

It may be a cause for concern that according to the survey, for 101 of the 217 programs, safeguarding students' well-being was indicated as either a minor function or not a function of the visits. This may be a reflection of a high level of confidence in the employers on the part of schools, possibly based on evidence other than the visits.

For most of the schools, the on-site visits apparently were fairly informal procedures with diffuse aims. While some of the schools studied went to the trouble of briefing teachers before their visits, most did not. Structuring of the visits would be necessary to ensure that the full benefits are realised.

As with finding and allocating placements, the visits are too important and too time consuming to be done properly by one or two people, and require the assistance of a number of school staff. The full benefits of the visits associated with some of the functions listed above require wide staff involvement to be realised.

In short, the potential benefits of the visits would justify the effort to involve as many teachers as possible and to brief them carefully.

7.3.4 Summary

To recapitulate various suggestions made above:

- Care should be taken, especially in programs involving large numbers of students, that individuals who need guidance and support obtain them. Ideally, some students should have series of work experiences tailored to their special needs.
- Sufficient work placements are probably there to be found in most localities.
- Wide involvement of school staff is recommended in arranging work experience placements in order to spread the work and allow individual attention.
- Placements should be described, discussed, allocated and monitored in terms of their potential educational value (a suggested categorisation is given in Chapter 6).
- Based on a clear understanding of the goals of the program or student, the school's requirements for work experience should be carefully communicated to employers. Schools should be selective among placements, monitoring them carefully.
- Visits to the work place during work experience form a key aspect of the work experience program, justifying efforts to involve as many teachers as possible and to brief them carefully.

7.4 DISCUSSION

Apparently irrespective of the pattern of organisation, all aspects of the evaluation indicated a high degree of enthusiasm for work experience among school staff, students, parents, and employers.

Only 20 per cent of schools did not offer work experience in 1981, and few offered only single programs to small proportions of their students. Close to 30 per cent of all State secondary students in Years 10, 11 and 12 in 1981 took part in a work experience program. (Figures supplied by the State Work Experience Co-ordinator show that approximately 40 per cent of all Year 10 State secondary students in 1981 took part in work experience.) State legislation for work experience was proclaimed less than two years previously. Such rapid, widespread voluntary adoption by schools of an innovation seems remarkable, particularly since

- adoption of work experience by a school is not mandatory;
- its organisation requires considerable time and energy and must stretch the resources of the school staff;
- it involves significant risks, requiring the school to deliver students into the care of people beyond the school's control;
- it brings the school under close scrutiny by the community; and
- it not only takes time away from other parts of the school curriculum, but also brings changes to the existing subjects.

To have become so widely adopted so quickly, the benefits of work experience must be clearly evident in practice to participants in work experience programs. In fact, the support from all quarters seemed to be based largely on first-hand observation of the benefits. School staff who had observed work experience programs acclaimed its benefits for students and themselves. Students of all levels of ability took it seriously and responded well to its challenges and opportunities. Although parents' participation in the organisation was usually low, they seemed to be interested in work experience and generally supported the idea. Employers were more than willing to participate and were keen to support, seldom refusing to renew their participation.

Perhaps this enthusiasm may wear off with the novelty, presenting problems for the future, but this does not appear to have happened yet in the schools where programs have been operating for a number of years.

There seems little reason to doubt that no matter how it was organised or what the intended outcomes were, benefits to all participants were obvious in most cases. Once tried, work experience seems to "sell itself". In brief, the main advantages work experience has are probably its wide acceptance and support in the community, and the relevance and importance attached to it by students. There may be lessons to learn for educators in pondering why this is so.

Possibly the community and students recognise the potency and value of experiential learning of the work experience type. Most educators are still dominated by the academic or scholarly tradition, in which the teacher has an authoritarian relationship with students, and learning is supposed to pass one-way from teacher to learner. In this tradition, the learning of abstractions from books and lectures is thought to be on a higher level than practical learning or learning by experience. Practical learning is held to be suitable for practical things, but when it is provided, the authoritarian position of the teacher is usually maintained by "structuring" the practical activities and arranging accompanying lectures or guided discussion to ensure that the appropriate bookish abstractions ("lessons") are made. The learner can never become independent of teacher or books (except for a tiny minority of scholars in each generation). Learning directly from experience or from other learners by sharing experiences are held to be so commonplace as to be of little value.

Apparently the community and students are aware of the relevance to young people of what can be learned in the work place. They recognise without difficulty the high potency of first-hand experience for learning what is important in students' current state of development. By contrast, educators' long standing and personally rewarding commitment to scholarly learning in the academic tradition may have been blinding us to the value and power of experiential learning. Observation at first-hand of the effects of experiential learning may be the only way for us to come to appreciate its relevance and potential, especially for young people at the point of becoming full fledged adults.

This discussion leads to the one major recommendation of this report: that *schools should be encouraged to seek the widest possible involvement of teaching staff in all phases of the work experience exercise* including:

- planning and review of programs;
- preparation of students for the experience;
- counselling and support of students before, during and after the experience;
- arranging work placements and briefing employers;
- visiting students and employers during the experience;
- debriefing students after the experience; and
- follow-up classroom activities.

An implication of this recommendation which goes beyond the school is that the Department of Education may have to supply encouragement for all teachers to become involved in work experience. This may be done by means of official declarations that work experience involvement is considered an important part of every teacher's job, and also by making provision to cover the expenses incurred by teachers in their visits into the work place.

Close involvement of as many teachers as possible in work experience should provide the following benefits.

- Teachers will gain in appreciation of the value of experiential learning.

- Students will see that the school attaches importance to the kind of learning which is accessible to all of them.
- Teachers will gain insights into the working world, the community of which the school is part, and the present and future needs of their students.
- Teachers will develop a better understanding of their students' abilities and personalities by observing and helping them to meet the demands of adult settings.
- Schools will be better able to provide the necessary support and assistance for individual students without having to restrict the availability of work experience.
- Schools will be able to carry out more thoroughly the tasks of briefing employers, visiting them during work experience, and monitoring work experience placements.
- Relationships between the school and community will penetrate more deeply into both, through being based on person-to-person working contacts.
- Teachers will enjoy a supportive relationship with students as employers assume much of the evaluative function.
- The burden associated with running work experience will be shared among a large number of people, giving programs better chances of success and survival than when one person virtually carries it all.

7.5 GENERAL SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Eighty per cent of the 206 schools in Queensland with courses for secondary students reported offering work experience in 1981. Forty-six of the schools offered more than one program of work experience.

Three types of program were offered:

A. General programs in which work experience was offered to all or most of the students in a year level. There were 110 programs of this type involving 10 637 students. Most of these programs were offered in Year 10.

B. Programs associated with special transition-to-work courses for selected students. There were 82 programs of this type involving 2 210 students. Most of these programs were offered in Year 11.

C. Programs associated with the teaching of a particular subject. There were 25 programs of this type involving 935 students. Most of these programs were offered in conjunction with vocational subjects in Years 11 and 12.

Work experience programs varied considerably in scope and organisation from school to school, but the following general pattern emerged:

The programs were supported either by special courses designed in the school, or by special units in regular subjects such as English, Citizenship, Social Studies, business subjects, or Manual Arts. These courses or units commonly provided information on jobs, development of social skills, and training in applying and interviewing for jobs. Work experience placements were allocated mainly on the basis of students' stated preferences for occupational fields. Efforts were made to accommodate students' preferences, which were usually found to be realistic in terms of the students' abilities. Parents were informed of the program and required to approve their children's work placements. One period of one or two weeks of work experience was provided. Employers were informed of the goals of the program, briefed on the legal aspects, and asked generally to treat students as regular employees. Otherwise, employers were left to arrange, supervise, and evaluate the actual experience. Students and employers were encouraged to arrange interviews prior to the work experience. Most of the time-consuming work of contacting employers and arranging placements was shouldered by the work experience co-ordinator. Some teachers were

requested to assist in visits to students and employers during the work experience. These visits were fairly informal. Employers welcomed the teachers who usually found the visits enjoyable. Employers were asked for verbal or written reports on students' work habits and social development during the work experience. On their return to school, students were asked to give verbal or written reports on their work experience in one of their classes.

Such programs seemed to be directed at providing students with a brief "taste" of adult working life in the world outside of school, with three main objectives:

- social development;
- general orientation to working life; and
- job acquisition skills.

Students' actual work experiences were found to vary considerably in their educational potential, although most of the students said they enjoyed their work experience, found it personally valuable, and had little difficulty adjusting to the work situation. Nine categories of work experience were found:

1. Regular work placements in which students carried out the functions of normal employees. Apart from not being paid, they became regular workers.

2. Supernumerary placements, in which there was not sufficient work to keep students occupied in a realistic way. Much time was spent with nothing to do, or doing minor tasks such as running errands or tidying up.

3. Apprenticeship placements, in which students took on the role of beginning apprentice.

4. Learner/assistant placements, in which students acted as aides to a skilled person, gaining an understanding of the kinds of work the person does.

5. Guided tour placements, in which students were conducted around a field of employment to observe the various activities in a line of work.

6. Orientation placements, in which students were shown around an area of employment and given opportunities to try some of the different types of work.

7. Onlooker placements, in which students observed people at work but took little or no part in the work.

8. Simulated work placements, in which students were given tasks which simulated the work in a work place, but did not actually provide a service or product.

9. School-based work experience, in which students worked on jobs created by the school to provide work experience for students.

General findings of the evaluation were:

- The time has arrived for most schools to begin to clarify the goals of their work experience programs as part of regular planning, evaluation and review exercises.

- Care should be taken, especially in programs involving large numbers of students, that individuals who need guidance and support obtain them. Ideally, some students should have a series of work experiences tailored to their special needs.

- Sufficient work placements are probably there to be found in most localities.

- Wide involvement of school staff is recommended in arranging work experience placements in order to spread the workload and allow individual attention.

- Placements should be described, discussed, allocated, and monitored in terms of their potential educational value.

- Based on a clear understanding of the goals of the program or student, the school's requirements for work experience should be carefully communicated to employers. Schools should be selective among placements, monitoring them carefully.

- Visits to the work place during work experience form a key aspect of the work experience program, justifying efforts to involve as many teachers as possible and to brief them carefully.

All aspects of the evaluation indicated a high degree of enthusiasm for work experience among school staff, students, parents and employers. The main advantages work experience has are probably its wide acceptance and support in the community, and the relevance and importance attached to it by students. These may stem from a recognition by the community and students of the potency and value of experiential learning of the work experience type, especially for students becoming adults.

The main recommendation of the evaluation is that schools should be encouraged to seek the widest possible involvement of teaching staff in all phases of the work experience exercise. This may provide the following benefits:

- Teachers will gain an appreciation of the value of experimental learning.

- Students will see that the school attaches importance to the kind of learning which is accessible to all of them.

- Teachers will gain insights into the working world, the community of which the school is part, and the present and future needs of their students.

- Teachers will develop a better understanding of their students' abilities and personalities by observing and helping them meet the demands of adult settings.

- Schools will be better able to provide the necessary support and assistance for individual students without having to restrict the availability of work experience.

- Schools will be able to carry out more thoroughly the tasks of briefing employers, visiting them during work experience, and monitoring work experience placements.

- Relationships between the school and community will penetrate more deeply into both through being based on person-to-person working contacts.

- Teachers will enjoy a supportive relationship with students as employers assume much of the evaluative function.

- The burden associated with running work experience will be shared among a large number of people, giving programs better chances of success and survival than when one person virtually carries it all.

APPENDIX 1: THE SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE ON WORK EXPERIENCE

WORK EXPERIENCE EVALUATION

Research Branch,
Department of Education,
P.O. Box 33,
NORTH QUAY, Q. 4000

SURVEY OF WORK EXPERIENCE IN HIGH SCHOOLS AND SECONDARY DEPARTMENTS - 1981

This survey is part of an evaluation of work experience in Queensland schools. The evaluation is of work experience generally, not of particular programs in individual schools.

INSTRUCTIONS

- In responding to this questionnaire, please confine your answers to the particular program described here:

This questionnaire refers to:
For other programs, use separate questionnaire.

- Please respond in terms of the *actual practice in 1981* associated with this program. Your responses should deal with the *specific and practical* as opposed to general and theoretical.
- Feel free to indicate non-applicability (N.A.), and to add extra comment where appropriate, but please try to answer every question. Space is left on the back page to allow extended comments.
- Most questions require you to answer by placing ticks in boxes [✓]. For some questions, more than one box may be ticked. These cases are indicated by the words, *more than one may apply*.
- Please try to complete questionnaires and return to Research Branch by
- Remember, for this questionnaire, answer specifically in terms of actual practice related to the program indicated in the box for 1981.

IF YOU ENCOUNTER DIFFICULTIES, PLEASE TELEPHONE TED HOBBS ON

(07) 224 7982

59

EXTENT OF WORK EXPERIENCE OFFERING

1. What periods of work experience are offered to each student in this program in 1981? (only one should apply)

(a) one block of one week ☐
(b) two blocks of one week ☐
(c) three blocks of one week ☐
(d) one block of two weeks ☐
(e) two blocks of two weeks ☐
(f) three blocks of two weeks ☐
(g) day release ☐ → Number of days [ ]
(h) varies with students' needs ☐
(i) other ☐ → Please specify: _____

_____
_____
_____
_____

2. What are the dates for work experience in this program for 1981? _____

_____
_____
_____

3. How many students will take part in this program in 1981? [ ]

ASSOCIATED SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

4. In some schools, regular class time is set aside for activities specifically related to work experience. What is the practice in your school with respect to this program? (more than one may apply)

(a) Special units related to work experience are included in certain regular subjects ☐ → Please specify the subjects: _____

_____

_____

(b) A special course or series of classes related to work experience is provided for students in this program ☐

(c) Other provision is made ☐ → Please specify: _____

_____

_____

(d) Little or no class time is taken up with activities related to work experience ☐

PLEASE TURN OVER

5. Below is a list of school activities which could be associated with a work experience program. Would each of these be considered a major aspect, a minor aspect, or not an aspect of this program?

(a)	Training in job-acquisition skills (e.g. interviews, applications)	→ . major aspect ☐ . minor aspect ☐ . not covered ☐
(b)	Provision of information and guidance about jobs or careers	→ . major aspect ☐ . minor aspect ☐ . not covered ☐
(c)	Training in general work skills and habits (e.g. following instructions, safety)	→ . major aspect ☐ . minor aspect ☐ . not covered ☐
(d)	Training in particular job skills (e.g. answering phone, making change, vocational skills)	→ . major aspect ☐ . minor aspect ☐ . not covered ☐
(e)	Self-evaluation activities in relation to possible job or career choices	→ . major aspect ☐ . minor aspect ☐ . not covered ☐
(f)	Training in work-related independence skills (e.g. travel, budget)	→ . major aspect ☐ . minor aspect ☐ . not covered ☐
(g)	Individual counselling and support directly related to work experience	→ . major aspect ☐ . minor aspect ☐ . not covered ☐
(h)	Sharing of experiences among students (e.g. videotapes, discussions, presentations)	→ . major aspect ☐ . minor aspect ☐ . not covered ☐

(Question 5 continued)

(i)	Development of social skills (e.g. courtesy, co-operation, seeking help)	→	. major aspect ☐ . minor aspect ☐ . not covered ☐
(j)	Personal development (e.g. confidence, overcoming shyness)	→	. major aspect ☐ . minor aspect ☐ . not covered ☐
(k)	Study of specific aspects of work (e.g. working conditions, pay, union membership)	→	. major aspect ☐ . minor aspect ☐ . not covered ☐
(l)	General study of work in a social context (e.g. work roles, industrial relations)	→	. major aspect ☐ . minor aspect ☐ . not covered ☐
(m)	Other activities (please specify below)	→	. major aspect ☐ . minor aspect ☐ . not covered ☐

_____

_____

_____

63

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INVOLVEMENT OF STAFF

6. Which personnel assist the co-ordinator with the following activities in this program? (more than one may apply)

(a) Initial contacting of employers →
- . no personnel other than the co-ordinator ☐
- . principal and/or other administrators ☐
- . specialists (e.g. guidance, resource or career teachers) ☐
- . non-professionals (e.g. teacher aides, volunteer parents, clerical staff) ☐
- . the teachers of associated courses or subjects ☐
- . as many other teachers as needed ☐
- . as many other teachers as possible ☐

(b) Briefing of employers prior to work experience →
- . no personnel other than the co-ordinator ☐
- . principal and/or other administrators ☐
- . specialists (e.g. guidance, resource or career teachers) ☐
- . non-professionals (e.g. teacher aides, volunteer parents, clerical staff) ☐
- . the teachers of associated courses or subjects ☐
- . as many other teachers as needed ☐
- . as many other teachers as possible ☐

(c) Counselling of individual students concerning work experience →
- . no personnel other than the co-ordinator ☐
- . principal and/or other administrators ☐
- . specialists (e.g. guidance, resource or career teachers) ☐
- . non-professionals (e.g. teacher aides, volunteer parents, clerical staff) ☐
- . the teachers of associated courses or subjects ☐
- . as many other teachers as needed ☐
- . as many other teachers as possible ☐

(d) Arranging work placements for individual students (including allocating placement and contacting employer) →
- . no personnel other than the co-ordinator ☐
- . principal and/or other administrators ☐
- . specialists (e.g. guidance, resource or career teachers) ☐
- . non-professionals (e.g. teacher aides, volunteer parents, clerical staff) ☐
- . the teachers of associated courses or subjects ☐
- . as many other teachers as needed ☐
- . as many other teachers as possible ☐

(Question 6 continued)

(e) Consulting parents with respect to work experience →
- no personnel other than the co-ordinator ☐
- principal and/or other administrators ☐
- specialists (e.g. guidance, resource or career teachers) ☐
- non-professionals (e.g. teacher aides, volunteer parents, clerical staff) ☐
- the teachers of associated courses or subjects ☐
- as many other teachers as needed ☐
- as many other teachers as possible ☐

(f) Visiting students at the work place →
- no personnel other than the co-ordinator ☐
- principal and/or other administrators ☐
- specialists (e.g. guidance, resource or career teachers) ☐
- non-professionals (e.g. teacher aides, volunteer parents, clerical staff) ☐
- the teachers of associated courses or subjects ☐
- as many other teachers as needed ☐
- as many other teachers as possible ☐

(g) Planning and policy making with reference to work experience →
- no personnel other than the co-ordinator ☐
- principal and/or other administrators ☐
- specialists (e.g. guidance, resource or career teachers) ☐
- non-professionals (e.g. teacher aides, volunteer parents, clerical staff) ☐
- the teachers of associated courses or subjects ☐
- as many other teachers as needed ☐
- as many other teachers as needed ☐

PLEASE TURN OVER

7. What relative emphasis is placed on each of the following functions during visits by school staff to students' work places during work experience?

(a) Advise, support, encourage students → . major function ☐
. minor function ☐
. not a function ☐

(b) Evaluate students' progress → . major function ☐
. minor function ☐
. not a function ☐

(c) Consult, advise, assist employers → . major function ☐
. minor function ☐
. not a function ☐

(d) Acknowledge, thank employers → . major function ☐
. minor function ☐
. not a function ☐

(e) Safeguard students' well being → . major function ☐
. minor function ☐
. not a function ☐

PREVIOUS WORK EXPERIENCE

8. Approximately what proportion of the students in this program have had work experience in a school program in previous years?

(a) none ☐
(b) less than one-quarter ☐
(c) between one-quarter and one-half ☐
(d) one-half or more ☐
(e) all, or nearly all ☐

ALLOCATION OF PLACEMENTS

9. To what extent are the following factors considered in allocating students to employers in this program?

(a) Students' stated preferences →
- primary consideration ☐
- secondary consideration ☐
- not a consideration ☐

(b) Students' abilities in relation to possible placements →
- primary consideration ☐
- secondary consideration ☐
- not a consideration ☐

(c) Employers' specifications of types of student or levels of qualifications →
- primary consideration ☐
- secondary consideration ☐
- not a consideration ☐

(d) Individual student's current needs or level of development →
- primary consideration ☐
- secondary consideration ☐
- not a consideration ☐

(e) Likelihood that placement may lead to permanent employment with that employer →
- primary consideration ☐
- secondary consideration ☐
- not a consideration ☐

(f) Suitability of placement to goals of particular unit, course or subject →
- primary consideration ☐
- secondary consideration ☐
- not a consideration ☐

(g) Match with student's probable future type of career or job →
- primary consideration ☐
- secondary consideration ☐
- not a consideration ☐

(h) Difference from student's future career or way of life →
- primary consideration ☐
- secondary consideration ☐
- not a consideration ☐

PLEASE TURN OVER

EMPLOYER PARTICIPATION

10. Approximately, what percentage of employers who were approached for the first time in 1981 declined to participate in this program?

(a) fewer than 1% ☐
(b) 1% to 5% ☐
(c) 6% to 10% ☐
(d) more than 10% ☐
(e) does not apply ☐

11. Approximately, what percentage of employers who had participated in this program in previous years declined when asked to participate again in 1981?

(a) fewer than 1% ☐
(b) 1% to 5% ☐
(c) 6% to 10% ☐
(d) more than 10% ☐
(e) does not apply ☐

12. How would you describe the co-operation of employers generally in this program?

(a) eager to participate ☐
(b) pleased to participate ☐
(c) willing to participate ☐
(d) hesitant to participate ☐
(e) reluctant to participate ☐

13. How are employers briefed about their involvement before the work experience?

(a) by letter ☐
(b) by telephone ☐
(c) in person ☐

14. Which of the following aspects are covered in briefing of employers? (more than one may apply)

(a) the goals of the work experience program ☐
(b) the particular goals and needs of each student placed with the employer ☐
(c) the employer's suggestions or ideas about appropriate activities or experiences ☐
(d) the school's suggestions or recommendations about appropriate activities or experiences ☐
(e) other (specify) ☐

_____
_____

15. What types of experience are employers asked to provide? (more than one may apply)

(a) a realistic simulation of employment (treat students as regular employees) ☐
(b) specific training or assistance (e.g. use of a procedure, or specific skills) ☐
(c) specific experience (e.g. use of a machine or procedure) ☐
(d) support and encouragement for the student or careful supervision ☐
(e) a variety of experiences ☐
(f) observation of various aspects of the work place ☐
(g) other (specify) ☐

_____
_____

PLEASE TURN OVER

STUDENT EVALUATION

16. Who is requested for reports (verbal or written) on students' progress during work experience? (more than one may apply)

(a) teacher ☐
(b) employer ☐
(c) parent ☐
(d) no reports are requested ☐

17. What aspects of students' progress do such reports cover? (more than one may apply)

(a) work habits (e.g. punctuality, industry) ☐
(b) social development (e.g. mixing with adults, co-operation, courtesy) ☐
(c) personal development (e.g. confidence, responsibility) ☐
(d) personal attributes (e.g. grooming, neatness) ☐
(e) educational progress (e.g. learning about commerce, industry) ☐
(f) specific work skills (e.g. typing, safety practices) ☐
(g) suitability for the type of job ☐
(h) does not apply ☐

18. What are the main functions of such reports? (more than one may apply)

(a) information for prospective employers ☐
(b) assistance in student's self-evaluation in relation to possible jobs/careers ☐
(c) input into future decisions about students' education ☐
(d) assessment of student in a course or subject ☐
(e) other (specify) ☐
_____
_____
(f) does not apply ☐

CONTACT WITH PARENTS

19. Which of the following statements apply to the involvement of parents in this program? (more than one may apply)

(a) parents are kept informed about the program ☐
(b) parents are consulted about their children's job placements ☐
(c) the physical support of parents is enlisted (e.g. assistance with clerical work, travel) ☐
(d) parents are involved in planning with respect to the program (e.g. on committees or by surveys) ☐
(e) an official report is made to parents on children's progress in work experience ☐
(f) where possible, face to face contact is arranged between parents and school staff ☐

GENERAL COMMENTS

20. Do you wish to comment on any aspect of work experience? Please use the space below.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR EFFORT AND CO-OPERATION

APPENDIX 2: GUIDE FOR PLANNING, EVALUATION, AND REVIEW OF WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAMS

A four step procedure is recommended for the evaluation, planning, and review of work experience programs:

1. Establish policy on reconciling general needs of all students with special needs of individuals.
2. Clarify goals of programs.
3. Decide on appropriate organisational practices in the light of the goals.
4. Select appropriate types of work placements and establish monitoring procedures for placements.

1. Reconciling general and special needs of students

Consider the following factors:

A. How many students will require individual support?

B. Who can be expected to provide the support?
- administration
- guidance officer
- specialist teachers
- selected teachers
- form teachers
- all teachers
- others

C. When can support be provided?
- as needed
- by appointment
- set times
- regular class periods set aside
- other

D. What is the potential number of suitable placements this year?

E. Which strategy seems feasible or desirable?
- large scale program
- smaller program for selected students
- large scale program with special help for selected students
- separate programs for different students' needs
- other

2. Clarifying the goals of the program

A. Study the Inventory of Possible Outcomes of Work Experience*, then for each program, allocate each of the potential outcomes in the inventory a priority as follows:

VH = very high priority
H = high priority
M = medium priority
L = low priority

A suggested form is shown in Table 1.

B. List here the outcomes rated very high priority. Try to make a summary goal statement taking in these outcomes. Do this for each different program.

Very high priority outcomes

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Summary goal statement

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

* Contained in Section 2.1 of this Report.

Table 1: Form for Allocating Priority to Goals of Work Experience

	Potential Outcome	Priority
Outcomes of Benefit to *Students*	1. A job	
	2. Job/career selection: knowledge about, and self-evaluation in relation to possible job choices	
	3. Employability: general and specific job skills, habits, attitude	
	4. Smooth transition to work/adult life: adaptation to work	
	5. Educational orientation: motivation, course selection, relevance	
	6. General education: study about work	
	7. Personal and social development: general maturity	
Outcomes of Benefit to *Teachers*	1. Personal and social development	
	2. Knowledge, understanding of students	
	3. Understanding of non-academic world	
	4. Increased relevance in teaching	
Outcomes of Benefit to *Employers*	1. Satisfaction in providing service	
	2. Unpaid help	
	3. Selection of employees	
	4. Contact with school: knowledge of, input into, or involvement in school activities, policies	
	5. Determining appropriate qualifications for positions	
Outcomes of Benefit to *Parents*	1. Assistance in guiding children towards adulthood	
	2. Knowledge of their children/improved relationships	
	3. Contact with school: knowledge of, input into, involvement in school activities, education of their own children	
Outcomes of Benefit to *Schools*	1. Provision for low academic achievers	
	2. Improved teacher-student relationships, school climate	
	3. Better school-community relationships, use of community resources	
	4. Better student orientation to school: attitude, achievement, school climate, motivation	

3. Deciding on appropriate organisational practices

Use the following check list to decide upon appropriate organisational practices in the light of the goals of each program.

A. Which types of work placement would be compatible with the program goals?
- regular work placement
- supernumerary placement
- apprenticeship placement
- learner/assistant placement
- guided tour placement
- orientation placement
- onlooker placement
- simulated work placement
- school-based work experience

B. Which pattern of work experience would be most compatible with the program goals and the placement types selected?
- one block of one week
- one block of two weeks
- two blocks of one week
- two blocks of two weeks
- three blocks of one week
- three blocks of two weeks
- day release
- combination
- one varying with students' needs

C. Which types of school activities would be compatible with the program goals?
- training in job-acquisition skills
- provision of information and guidance about jobs and careers
- training in general work skills and habits (e.g. following instructions, safety)
- training in particular job skills (e.g. answering telephone, making change, vocational skills)
- self-evaluation activities in relation to possible job or career choices
- training in work-related independence skills (e.g. travel, budget)
- individual counselling and support directly related to work experience
- sharing of experiences among students (e.g. videotapes, discussions, presentation)
- development of social skills (e.g. courtesy, co-operation, seeking help)
- personal development (e.g. reliability, confidence, overcoming shyness)
- study of specific aspects of work (e.g. working conditions, pay, union membership)
- general study of work in a social context (e.g. work roles, industrial relations)
- other

D. Which pattern of offering school activities would be most suitable for the selection in C?

- special units in regular subjects
- a special course or series of classes
- a few special classes or lunch-hour meetings
- combination

E. What level of staff involvement is desirable considering the program goals?

- co-ordinator only
- school administration
- specialist teachers (e.g. career, guidance)
- non-professional staff (parents, aides, clerical staff)
- teachers of associated courses
- as many other teachers as needed
- as many other teachers as possible

F. What priority should be allocated to each of the following aspects in allocating placements to students, considering the program goals?

- students' stated preferences
- students' abilities in relation to placements
- employers' specifications of types of student or level of qualifications
- individual students' current needs or level of development
- likelihood that placement may lead to permanent employment with that employer
- suitability of placement to goals of a course or subject
- match with students' probable future type of career or job
- difference from students' probable future career or way of life

G. What emphasis should be placed on the following aspects in briefing of employers prior to work experience?

- the goals of the particular program
- the particular goals and needs of each individual student placed with the employer
- the employer's suggestions or ideas about appropriate activities or experiences
- the school's suggestions or recommendations about appropriate activities or experience

H. Who should assist with the briefings?

- co-ordinator of work experience
- school administration
- selected teachers
- teachers involved in related courses
- as many teachers as needed
- as many teachers as possible

I. What emphasis should be placed on each of the following aspects during on-site visits to students' work places during the work experience?

- safeguard students' well-being
- advise, support, encourage students
- evaluate students' progress
- consult, advise, assist employers
- acknowledge, thank employers
- other

J. Who should assist with the on-site visits?

- the co-ordinator of work experience
- school administration
- selected teachers
- teachers of related courses
- as many teachers as needed
- as many teachers as possible

K. What structures should be provided for the on-site visitors?

- general guidelines
- check lists, schedules
- meetings and discussions
- individual briefings

L. Which functions of evaluation of students' progress during work experience are compatible with the program goals?

- assessment of students' employability
- input into future decisions about students' work experience or educational programs
- information for prospective employers
- assessment of students in a course or subject
- assistance in students' self-evaluation in relation to future jobs or careers
- information for students on areas needing improvement related to obtaining and holding a job
- information for school on effectiveness of the program
- assessment of progress in terms of educational goals (such as learning about working)

M. Which aspects should be covered in evaluation of students in consideration of the functions selected above?

- work habits (e.g. punctuality, industry)
- social development (e.g. mixing with adults, co-operation, courtesy)
- personal development (e.g. responsibility, confidence)
- personal attributes (grooming, neatness)
- educational progress (e.g. learning about commerce, industry)
- specific work skills (e.g. typing, safety practices)
- suitability for the type of job

N. Who should be asked for reports on students' progress?

- work experience co-ordinator
- visiting teachers (verbal or written?)
- employers (verbal or written?)
- parents (verbal or written?)
- other (verbal or written?)

O. How can parents be involved?

- kept informed about the program
- consulted about their children's job placements
- physical support enlisted (e.g. assistance with clerical work, transport)
- involved in planning with respect to the program (e.g. on committees or by surveys)
- provided with an official report on children's progress in work experience
- direct participation (e.g. in organisation, or classroom activities)

4. Monitoring work placements

Request teachers, during their visits to students at their work places during work experience to classify students' placements. Have students do the same on their return to school after work experience. The following brief form can be used.

Which of the following descriptions *best* applies to the work experience placement?

(1) Treated like a normal worker. Did the same work as if a beginning employee in that work place (Regular Work Placement).

(2) Given mostly odd jobs, or often without enough work to do (Supernumerary Placement).

(3) Taught skills and given work to do like an apprentice or trainee (Apprenticeship Placement).

(4) Assisted and worked alongside a skilled person (Learner/Assistant).

(5) Shown around the business or area of work but not given work to do (Guided Tour).

(6) Shown around the business or area of work and allowed to try various jobs (Orientation Placement).

(7) Mainly looked on while other people worked (Onlooker Placement).

(8) Given things to do which were like the work done in that place, but not the actual jobs (Simulation).

(9) Worked in the school (School-Based Work Experience).

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